OUTLINE BIBLE STUDY COURSES
OF
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE

The Origin and Religious Teaching of the Old Testament Books

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AGENTS
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK

THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

The Origin and Religious Teaching of the Old Testament Books

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THE ORIGIN AND RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

AN ELEMENTARY COURSE OF STUDY

BY

GEORGIA LOUISE CHAMBERLIN

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THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE

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Published October 1908
Second Impression November 1910
Third Impression October 1911

Composed and Printed By
The University of Chicago Press
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

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FOREWORD TO THE STUDENT

The purpose of the course of study contained in the following pages is to give a rapid survey of the literature of the Old Testament with a view to suggesting in the case of each book its relation to the progress of the history and thought of the Hebrew people. The principle that the biblical literature, whether it be in the form of annals, poetry, prophetic addresses, or problem literature, was produced primarily for the purpose of the guidance of the Hebrew people in their religious life is the basis of the course. Understanding that in Israel politics and religion were one, the course also attempts to point out, as clearly as may be in such a variety of literature, the controlling religious idea of the authors or compilers of each book.

Purpose of the Course

The portions of Scripture assigned for reading in this course are necessarily somewhat longer than in other Outline Courses of the Institute, but, on the other hand, it is not expected that the student will so carefully study these selections. The reading should give a general conception of each book, but detailed study must be postponed for later courses.

The limitations under which such a course is prepared must of necessity be great. The large number of books to be treated makes it impossible to treat any one adequately. The close relation which the literature of any nation holds to the history of the nation renders a knowledge of the history almost necessary to an understanding of the literature. In so short a course it is possible only to suggest the historical movements which furnish the background for the literature.

Limitations

Another limitation is found in the large variety of persons for whom the course is intended, namely, those who have no knowledge of the Old Testament as well as those who, while having considerable familiarity with it, do not appreciate as yet the historical method of study, and desire through this course to get a working point of view of the Old Testament.

A third limitation is the fact that in this series of Outline Courses no books but the Bible are used. The student could obtain much help from reading outside books on the history and literature. A list of such books will gladly be furnished, but the actual work of the course is intended to be accomplished with the use of only the Old Testament, and the instructions contained in this book.

Many hands have had a part in the production of the literature of the Hebrew people as it appears in the Old Testament. Not only were there original authors but compilers and editors, each having his own point of view and his own particular purpose in mind. Among these men, however, stand conspicuously three classes of teachers, the prophets, the wise men, and the priests. It is not possible to say in regard to each book, This is the production of one or another from one of these classes, for the work of prophet, priest, and wise man has sometimes been combined artificially, but more frequently all have grown together until in the conception of the later writer there is no distinction, the work of the prophets containing many elements of the Wisdom literature and of the priestly work, that of the priests and lawgivers being influenced by the prophetic spirit, and that of the wise men being dominated by the great prophetic doctrine of Jehovah, the creator and ruler of the universe.

The Makers of Hebrew Literature

In general terms, however, we may say that the first six books of the Bible, the Hexateuch, combine in a somewhat artificial way the work of both prophets and priests, the stories being chiefly prophetic, the laws and genealogies and part of the stories being of priestly origin, that the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings are predominantly prophetic, while Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah are more largely from priestly hands. The various collections of the sermons of the prophets, called in most cases by the names of the prophets, classify themselves. The contributions of the wise men are found chiefly in such books as Proverbs on the one hand and on the other in problem books, such as Job and Ecclesiastes. Each of these different classes of writers has, as will be seen from the following studies, peculiarities of literary style and of thought. While the priests dealt with all things pertaining to ceremonial worship, the temple, religious laws, songs for temple worship, and the like, the prophets fought wholly for an ethical content to religion, deprecating the ceremonial side of religion when without such content, striving always to make a connection between conduct and religion. To them, more than to any other class of Israel's writers, came the growing conception of God, of his relation to the world, and to individuals. As the history of the nation became darker and darker the faith of the prophets in Jehovah and in his power to save his people became stronger and more luminous. Perhaps we may say that

Jesus, as a teacher, approached more nearly the prophetic method than that of the priest or wise man, although his sententious sayings show a large Wisdom element.

The wise man in ancient Israel was not simply a man who could say wise things, but he belonged to a class to be found among all ancient, oriental peoples, a class of men who gave their lives to the discussion of practical ethics, to the observation of life, and to reflection upon passing events. Deep reverence was paid to these venerable and sagacious men, and they doubtless wielded a powerful influence. Their point of view was more universal than that of either priest or prophet. To both of these latter the message of God was to Israel, but the wise man gave his message to all the world. It was a general ethical message. Unlike, however, the philosophers of modern times, with their varied theories of life, it took for granted one great principle, namely, that back of everything was God, and that true wisdom consisted in perfect adjustment to the requirements of God. Although the Sages make less frequent mention of the name of God than any other class of writers, though they go into the most minute details of daily life in their instructions, yet in all their work one sees a broad conception of God as creator and ruler of the universe.

In taking up the books for special study, it has seemed wise to begin the course with the study of the Book of Genesis, since the events with which it deals are first in chronological order, although perhaps somewhat colored by the religious ideas of a period just previous to Amos. If we were to begin with the earliest literature we should select a few of the old folk-songs from Genesis and Numbers, and pass from that to the Book of Judges which presents quite primitive literature of the Hebrews, the compiler of the Book of Judges having retained the old stories just as they stood, without rewriting them as in the case of the stories found in the Pentateuch. The remainder of the books are taken up as far as possible in chronological order and in relation to the history through which they were produced.

If the student should find at the end of this course that he has gained a living interest in the Old Testament we shall feel that the object of the course has been achieved. We can only hope further that this interest will lead to more careful study of courses covering a smaller and more definite range of vision.

The author of this course makes no claim to originality, having borrowed freely from many well-known books and from other material already in printed form. A list of such books for the student's use will be furnished if desired.

THE MORAL EFFECT OF HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE BIBLE

That the adoption of the historical point of view in studying and teaching the Bible raises many perplexing questions no intelligent advocate of historical study will deny. Of these none is more serious than the problem whether such study can be made morally and religiously effective. The prosecution of the historical method soon leads to the discovery that the various portions of the Bible do not all present the same conception of God, the same ideals of religion, the same standards of moral conduct. And from this it obviously follows that the teacher of the Bible cannot say to his pupils or imply in his teaching: "Whatever teaching or command you find between the covers of the Book comes to you today with divine authority, and demands of you acceptance and obedience."

But the untenableness of the conception of the Bible as authoritative in every part for men of today is not an original discovery of modern historical study. Jesus and Paul perceived and taught it long ago. Jesus, to mention but a single example, declared that the Old Testament law of food was without valid basis. Paul made freedom from circumcision a vital element of his gospel. Both clearly rejected the authority of statutes, whose divine origin they did not dispute, for men of their day and by implication for men of subsequent times. Not less certainly did Jesus at least condemn the vindictive spirit expressed in some of the psalms. But even more significant than the rejection of individual statutes or the disapproval of single utterances of psalmist or prophet is the repudiation, which is in these things involved, of the whole principle of legalism and the method of developing character which is based upon legalism. The Christianity of Jesus and his great apostle is fundamentally a religion, not of an authoritative book, but of a God revealing himself through the experience of the individual and the race. He who would re-establish the legalistic idea of the Bible as in every part authoritative for men of today must build up what Jesus and Paul destroyed, and destroy what they built up.

But the New Testament not only protests against the teaching of religion on a basis of the authority of all the teachings of the book, it also points out what is to take its place. Subjecting the religion of his own day to a searching and discriminating criticism, which approved some elements and condemned others, Jesus appealed to men to live as he lived and taught, on the ground that such living was harmonious with reality as known through experience, past and present. Speaking of the utterances of the prophets of his day, Paul, who spoke, as he confessed, by the Spirit, bade his disciples: "Prove all things, hold fast the good." Rejecting the statutes of the Old Testament as clearly as he retained and reaffirmed certain of its fundamental religious and ethical ideas, he defended this position by appeal to experience—his own, that of his nation, that of his gentile converts.

Can we devise a more effective way today? The historical method of study leads the pupil through the biblical record of the experience of centuries, including that of Old Testament patriarch, prophet, and psalmist, and New Testament Christ, and apostle, and common Christian. It does not say to him: "Each experience of all these is worthy of your imitation; each utterance of theirs comes to you with authority." It cannot do this if it would, for to do so would issue in the paradox of rejecting the teaching of the supreme teacher of all, Jesus himself. It would not if it could, for it has learned from Him a better way. Jesus has taught us that this record of experience and teaching makes its appeal to every soul of man. To each one differently indeed, according to his age, maturity, personal experience, and attitude toward the good; but to each, if only it is rightly presented, in such way as to waken the divine imperative of his own soul, bidding him choose the good and flee the evil.

The historical method speaks for truth, and bids the soul, following this supremely, use all else, even Church and Book, as means to its discovery. It is an epoch in the history of any man when he ventures forth upon the truth alone, not even knowing yet what that truth is, but determined resolutely to follow it wherever it leads. He alone is God's free man; for the truth alone can make us free.

But again, the adoption of the historical method is a gain, because history, if only the term be taken in its large and true sense, is the one great teacher of mankind. Or, better stated, it is God's one method of teaching men. Mere knowledge of historical facts is not wisdom. But he who will not learn from history debars himself from learning at all. For it is through history—i. e., through the knowledge of human experience—that men know all that they now know and must learn all that they are ever to learn. The sphere of religion and morals is no exception to this broad principle. The pre-eminence of the Bible as a basis of religious instruction, as an agent for the development of character, results not from its being outside the realm of history, but from the fact that it is a history of experience in the distinctly moral and religious sphere. To study this record historically is but to seek to see and know God by retracing and living again those experiences of the race in which God has most fully revealed himself, which by common confession have most to teach us concerning the true way of life for man. Let us face the difficulties bravely, knowing that truth lies beyond.

STUDY I

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

WORLD STORIES

§ 1. The Hebrew story of the beginning of sin. Gen. 2:5—3:24.
§ 2. The beginning of the world. Gen. 1:1—2:4.
§ 3. The two brothers. Gen. 4:1–17.
§ 4. The Deluge. Gen. 6:5—9:17.
§ 5. The table of nations. Gen., chap. 10.
§ 6. The confusion of tongues. Gen. 11:1–9.

STORIES OF THE PATRIARCHS

§ 7. The emigration of the ancestors of Abraham. Gen. 11:27—12:9.
§ 8. Abram in Egypt. Gen. 12:10–20.
§ 9. Abram and Lot. Gen. 13:1–18.
§10. Abram's defense of his land. Gen., chap. 14.
§11. The desire for an heir. Gen. 15:1–11.
§12. The covenant name and sign. Gen. 17:1–27.
§13. A son of promise. Gen. 18:1–15.
§14. A dispute over a well. Gen. 21:22–34.
§15. A lesson concerning human sacrifice. Gen., chap. 22.
§16. An oriental bargain. Gen., chap. 23.
§17. An oriental courtship. Gen., chap. 24.
§18. Jacob the usurper. Gen. 27:1–45; chaps. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32.
§§19, 20. Joseph, Israel's ideal ancestor. Gen., chaps. 37, 39–45; 46:1–7, 26–34; 47, 48; 49:28–33; 50.

THE EXODUS AND THE LAW

§21. Exodus, as a book.
§22. Early stories of Moses. Exod. 1:1—2:23.
§23. The great commission. Exod. 2:23—4:17.
§24. The demand for liberty. Exod. 5:1—6:13.
§25. The signs of Jehovah's power. Exod. 7:14—10:29.
§26. Egypt's despair. Exod. 11:1—12:14, 21–36.
§27. The deliverance at the Red Sea. Exod., chaps. 12—15:22.
§28. Troubles in the desert. Exod. 15:22—17:16.
§29. Organization and law. Exod., chaps. 18–20.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY

GENESIS AND EXODUS

GENESIS

First day. §1. Read carefully the general introduction; note especially the reasons for studying the Book of Genesis first, although it reflects a later state of religious thought than portions of later books.

Recalling the character of the book as (1) a compilation of the early traditions of the Hebrews in regard to the origin of the world, of the Hebrew people, of some of the impressive phenomena of life, and of the more important institutions of the Hebrew religion, glance through the book and note that it falls into two natural divisions, chaps. 1–11 containing what may be called "world stories," and chaps. 12–50, the stories of the fathers of the Hebrew people, or the patriarchs.

Recall again that although a compilation of early traditions the latest author or editor of the book had a definite religious purpose which guided him in the selection of his material and caused him to lay special emphasis upon certain features of his story. In our own study it is this special purpose of the author which most interests us because in it we see reflected the religious condition of the people on the one hand and on the other the religious teaching of the inspired men who carried Israel in each succeeding generation through the most wonderful religious development the world has ever known.

Read Gen. 2:5—3:24. All ancient nations had stories of the beginning of the world. Recall the stories of Greek literature and remember that the ancient Egyptians and the Babylonians, both much older nations than the Hebrews, had such stories. Some of them, such as the story of the garden, of the first man and the first woman, and of the Deluge, are similar to the Hebrew story. Note as you read the selection for the day the marks of an ancient story, the childlike notion of the origin of woman; the picture of perfect innocence (the innocence of ignorance, however), God walking and talking as a man, the harmlessness of the animal world, the standing and speaking serpent. Although this story has much in common with other ancient stories, in none of the stories of the other nations do we find any special religious purpose, but simply the common interest of mankind in the beginning of things.

Re-read the Hebrew story and raise the question, Is the author chiefly interested in how man *began* or how man *fell*, that is, is he trying to account for the existence of sin in the world and to brand it with the displeasure of God from the beginning? If so, was he a true interpreter of the nature or process of sin? Note (*a*) Gen. 3:1–3, the prohibition which may stand for all the forbidden things of life; (*b*) vss. 3–5, the words of the serpent which may represent the voice of illegitimate desire; (*c*) vs. 6,

the yielding to desire against judgment; (*d*) vs. 7, the regret and shame of an unlawful experience; (*e*) vs. 8, the fear of punishment which needs no interpretation; and vss. 9–22, the trial, excuses, and punishment.

Is this a true programme of sin in this generation? Is it not remarkable that the ancient Hebrew writer was able so graphically to picture by means of this old story the eternal principle that sin brings punishment? Is not this the main purpose of the story?

Second day. §2. Read Gen. 1:1—2:4. Note the division into stanzas, each ending in the refrain, "And there was evening," etc., the climax coming in 2:1. Compare the spiritual picture of God in this great creation poem with that in the story of the previous day. Is not the Great Spirit, who by his word brings the elements of the universe into existence, peopling it with all that the writer had observed as living creatures, making all subject to the last and greatest creation, man himself, a much higher conception of God than the naïve and childlike ideal of the former story?

Read Gen. 2:2–4. Does it seem to you that these verses are the real climax of chap. 1, and that the author is intending by his great poem not only to show forth God as the creator of the natural world but also as the founder of the institution of the Sabbath? May we regard the writer of this story, as one who, living at a much later period than the former, was deeply interested in the enforcement of the command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" and his message, "the God who made the universe, our God, demands that a time be set apart for worship, a time which He made sacred to himself, 'He hallowed it'"? Could the writer have made a stronger plea for worship than this?

Third day. §3. Read Gen. 4:1–17, an old story similar to other ancient stories in which the killing of a brother is associated with the building of a city (cf. the case of Romulus and Remus). In the hands of the Hebrew writer it becomes the vehicle of a profound religious truth, the responsibility of man for man.

Fourth day. §4. Read Gen. 6:5—7:24. Do not be disturbed by any discrepancies which appear in this story, such as that between 6:19 and 7:2, the number of animals to be taken into the Ark, or the fact that the figures regarding the duration of the period of seclusion in the Ark are stated differently in different places. This confusion is due to the fact that, true to the literary habit of his time, the last author or editor of the book took differing stories of the Flood just as he found them, and wove them together, each account being to him equally sacred.

This story of the Flood represents one of the most universal and uniform traditions of ancient peoples. It is found in many literatures, but in none but the Hebrew story do we find any pervading religious purpose. In the introduction to the story, vss. 5–8, and the myth preceding it which he has accepted from the common heritage of his people, the writer of the Book of Genesis finds the reason for the great catastrophe.

Fifth day. §4 (*cont.*). Read Gen. 8:1—9:17, and note that in the conclusion of the story is found the main purpose of the writer, (1) to show that back of the regularly returning seasons and the unchanging alternation of night and day, the constant self-replenishment of the earth and its increase, and the dominion of man, is the power and will of God; (2) the beautiful but mysterious rainbow is the sign of his favor; and (3) the institution of sacrifice (so fundamental a part of the worship of Israel) is the proper expression of allegiance to him.

Does not the story wonderfully portray a God-given faith in the stability of nature and nature's God, and in the dignity of man, whose blood shall in no wise be shed by man, and with whom the great God enters into covenant? Note, however, that it is the righteous man only who receives the favor. This story is the epitome of early Old Testament teaching: the wicked perish, the righteous prosper.

Sixth day. §5. Read Gen., chap. 10, the table through which the ancient writer seeks to explain the existence of many nations although, to him, all must of necessity be descendants of Noah.

Seventh day. §6. Read Gen. 11:1–9, a somewhat different story, but probably older, of the confusion of tongues as a result of Jehovah's anger at the presumption of the builders of the great tower. Note that this is inserted right in the midst of the genealogy of Shem's descendants, which is carried on to Abram in 11:26, 27.

Eighth day. §7. With chap. 12 of the Book of Genesis we enter upon a distinctly different series of stories. The world-wide phenomena of birth, death, sin, sacrifice, suffering, and the existence of different nations and tongues being accounted for as having their origin in the will and purpose of God, the Hebrew nation as the chosen people of God must next be strengthened and inspired by their ancestral history, which to the writer shows the clearest evidence of God's dealing with his people. Look up Ur[1] of the Chaldees on the map and trace the journey of Abram as described in Gen. 11:27—12:9. Note that this was a tribal emigration, Abram having become the head of the tribe at the death of his father Terah.

Ninth day. §8. Read Gen. 12:10–20, and note the author's evident condemnation of Abram for his deception practiced in order that his own life might be safe.

Tenth day. §9. Read Gen. 13:1–18, and consider the generous nature of Abram. Is this in the mind of the author one of the reasons why Jehovah could so freely treat with him?

Eleventh day. §10. Read Gen., chap. 14, another tribute to the valor and high-mindedness of the father of the Hebrew nation.

Twelfth day. §11. Read Gen. 15:1–11, and note the fact that although rich and powerful, Abram is in his own estimation poor, since he possesses no son to inherit his name and to keep it fresh in the minds of succeeding generations.

Consider the peculiar form of the promise of a son, vs. 5. The imagery of the biblical story is unsurpassed in literature. Study the old custom of sealing a promise by a ceremonial, vss. 9–11.

[1] The location of Ur of the Chaldees as found upon the map is only conjecture. A site far north of this is also considered probable by many scholars.

Read Gen. 16:1–15, and note the birth of Ishmael, who proves, however, not to be the son of promise who shall make Abram's name great and remove the curse of childlessness from his beautiful wife, Sarai.

Thirteenth day. §12. Read Gen. 17:1–27. Consider the significance of the change of name from Abram to Abraham (see margin of Revised Version), the renewal of the promises, and the establishment of a sign of the covenant with Abraham and his descendants forever. The custom of circumcision was common to many ancient nations. The Hebrews in taking it over made of it a hallowed sign of membership in the tribe or nation and of relationship to Jehovah.

Fourteenth day. §13. Read Gen. 18:1–15, and note the more definite promise of a son to be born to Sarai, and Gen. 21:1–7, the fulfilment of that promise.

Fifteenth day. §14. Read Gen. 21:22–34, an illustration of the common oriental method of settling disputes, and reflect that the covenant established between God and Abraham was in substance attributing to God the highest human virtue known to Abraham, namely, faithfulness to a covenant promise. It will be interesting to note that as human character rose in the scale, so human ability to comprehend the character of God increased.

Sixteenth day. §15. Remembering that human sacrifice was the common custom of the nations surrounding Palestine, and indeed probably among the Canaanites in Palestine itself, read the very beautiful story in Gen., chap. 22, in which Abraham, filled with gratitude to God for his great gifts, yet believing with the people about him that God required as a sacrifice the greatest and best of his gifts, brings his only son Isaac. Blindly following the voice of his conscience he feels that, although he takes the life which is to be the means of fulfilment of the great promises of posterity, God will be pleased. Can you imagine a more telling argument against human sacrifice than the outcome of the story? Read II Kings 21:6; 23:10, and note that a thousand years after Abraham the terrible practice of human sacrifice was still prevalent. There was great need of this purposeful story condemning it. Do not fail to note the perfection of detail, the simplicity, and the climactic effect of the story.

Seventeenth day. §16. Read Gen., chap. 23, and find a story of an ancient oriental bargain, full of picturesque detail and local color.

Eighteenth day. §17. Read Gen., chap. 24, the longest chapter in the book, the charming narrative of the courtship of Isaac and Rebekah. Did the author, perhaps, lay such emphasis on the account because of the importance which the Semitic peoples attached to the mother, and a desire to emphasize the dignity of the ancestry of the chosen people?

Nineteenth day. §18. Read Gen. 27:1–45. Study the characteristics of the two brothers, the indifference of Esau to those things which an oriental so highly prized, the paternal blessing, carrying with it a double portion, the headship of the tribe, and the prosperity which was thought to be to a certain extent under the ancestral control. Does the author condemn Jacob, or Esau? Does he not in this and in the stories of Jacob's shrewdness in later years (see chaps. 30, 31) rather intend to enhance the glory of Israel's ancestor, Jacob, who, although the younger son, was able to control circumstances and accomplish his purpose? Does this suggest that the original teller of the story had not himself so high an ethical standard as the Golden Rule, although probably representing the highest ethics of his day?

Does not the final author, however, in the arrangement of the story of Jacob, with emphasis upon the enforced exile, chap. 28, and the hardness of Laban, chap. 29, the fear of Esau, chap. 32, and the hardships of Jacob's old age, intend to exhibit the disasters which follow hasty action undirected by God.

Twentieth day. §19. Read at one sitting as a beautiful story Gen., chaps. 37, 39, 40, and 41.

Twenty-first day. §20. Continue with chaps. 42, 43, 44, 45, 46:1–7, 26–34, and chaps. 47, 48, 49:28–33; and chap. 50.

Thus ends the story of the life of Israel's ideal ancestor, Joseph, in whom no fault is found by the prophet-teacher through whom this story has come to us.

Twenty-second day. Recall now the book of Genesis as a whole. Does it not clearly teach (1) that in the beginning God was, and that by him all things were made? (2) that man, the highest achievement of the creative process, was destined to be a creator in turn and to rule all lower forms of life and energy? (3) that the Hebrew nation, having its beginning in its great ancestor, Abraham, was from the first destined to great and special service? (4) that the religious teachers among the Hebrews who, under divine guidance, preserved for us the literature of the nation saw clearly that the God of the Hebrews was not only a powerful God but an ethical God, in whose worshipers certain standards of conduct were required? (5) that failure to measure up to such standards as they knew was sure to bring disaster? (6) that from the beginning the human heart has turned to worship as the natural and helpful recognition of the power and benefits of God?

Granting that this book was primarily intended to teach the Hebrew people of the prophet's own day, does it not contain in the simple stories of the childhood of the race and of the beginnings of our religion some of the essential principles of Christianity?

EXODUS

Twenty-third day. §21. The Book of Exodus, like Genesis, falls into two distinct divisions. Chaps. 1—24:8 contain the story of the problems of the Hebrew people in Egypt whither they had gone in the days of their ancestor, Joseph, down to the passage of the Red Sea in their escape from bondage, and the giving of the law by their great leader, Moses. Chaps. 25–40 are devoted to detailed instructions for the construction of an elaborate place of worship. Possibly this portion of the book may have been written much later than the other, at a time when the hardships and privations of the desert seemed less real than the necessity for an elaborate worship of so great a God as Jehovah. Since the book takes its name from the great deliverance from bondage we shall confine our study to chaps. 1–24 in which the Exodus with the circumstances leading up to and following it is recorded. In the study of these

chapters we shall not look for religious teaching in connection with the work of each day, but rather for an impression of the great lesson of the story as a whole.

Twenty-fourth day. §22. Read Exod. 1:1–7, an epitome of the history of approximately 400 years between the great Pharaoh of Joseph's day, a Hyksos ruler, whose date may have been near 1600 B. C., and Rameses II, of a different dynasty, most probably the Pharaoh of the oppression. Read vss. 8–10, and note the fear of the foreigner in the land, which led (vss. 11–22) to the enslaving and oppression of the Hebrews and finally to the desire for their extermination. Read 2:1–11, the naïve and charming story of the preservation of the life of the Hebrew baby, Moses; vss. 11–15, a story of the valor of Moses as a young man, leading, however, to his flight from Egypt; and vss. 16–22, the marriage of Moses in Midian. (Locate Midian on the map.) Note the fragmentary character of the biography of Moses, three short anecdotes connected with his birth, his flight, and his marriage. Let your imagination fill in the years of his life at the court of Pharaoh, receiving the education of a young prince, but carrying continually the impressions received from his Hebrew mother who became his hired nurse, and the knowledge that he himself was of the despised and oppressed race.

Twenty-fifth day. §23. Note Exod. 2:23–25, the accession of a new king and a possible hope of deliverance or rebellion. Read Exod. 3:1–12, the call of Moses to deliver his people; vss. 13–15, the revelation of a new name for God, Jehovah; vss. 16–20, instructions and promise of victory; vss. 21, 22, the coming terror of the Egyptians who will permit not only the departure of the Hebrews but their own despoiling; 4:1–17, encouragement of Moses by the provision of signs, the promise of the eloquent Aaron's assistance, and a magic rod. (It should be borne in mind that this was an age of magic. Official magicians were a necessary part of the Egyptian court. In the mind of the writer Moses must have been equipped with the same gifts in order to bend the mighty Pharaoh to Jehovah's will, and maintain Jehovah's great name against the gods of Egypt.) Read also vss. 27–31, the meeting of Aaron and Moses, and the reception of the message by the Hebrew people. Shall we not surmise that this story is an epitome of many months of labor among the people?

Twenty-sixth day. §24. Read Exod. 5:1–3, the demand of Moses and Aaron; vss. 4–6, the reply of the Pharaoh; vss. 6–19, the increased burdens; vss. 20, 21, the complaint of the people against Moses and Aaron; vss. 22, 23, the appeal to Jehovah; 6:1–9, the renewal of the promise; vss. 8–13, the appearance before the Pharaoh.

Twenty-seventh day. §25. Read rapidly Exod. 7:14—10:29, the stories of the plagues with which Jehovah, according to ancient tradition, visited Egypt because of the Pharaoh's continued refusal to let the Hebrew people go into the wilderness to offer sacrifice to him. Shall we consider that these plagues covered a period of years in which the Pharaoh was slowly coming to realize the strength of the God of the Hebrews?

Twenty-eighth day. §26. Read Exod. 11:1—12:14, 21–36, the account of the last great affliction which raised such a cry of despair among the Egyptians that they besought the Hebrew people to depart, even giving them their property without stint.

Twenty-ninth day. §27. Trace on the map a probable journey from Egypt to the Red Sea. See Exod. 12:37–39; 13:20; 14:2. Read Exod., chap. 14, the story of the pursuit by the Egyptians and the terror of the Hebrews. Imagine the situation with the sea before and the Egyptians behind. Consider the splendid power and courage of Moses in this trying crisis, and his triumph as the sea swallows the pursuing enemy. Is not this a thrilling story told with great power? We cannot wonder that the song which follows, chap. 15, seemed to the author of the book a fitting expression of the joy of this occasion, a song which was doubtless known and sung throughout all Palestine centuries later.

Thirtieth day. §28. Read rapidly Exod. 15:22—17:16, noting the murmurings of the people on account of the lack of food and drink, the supply of their needs, and the battle with the Amalekites. Consider the mixed multitude, as many people as in a large town, men, women, and children; men of the building trades, shepherds, and various other occupations; women careful and careless; children good and bad, traveling through the desert with tents for homes, accompanied by their flocks and herds. Imagine the slow progress, the discontent, and disorder.

Thirty-first day. §29. Read rapidly Exod., chap. 18, with its account of the plan for the relief of Moses adopted by him at the suggestion of his father-in-law, Jethro. Glance through Exod., chaps. 19—20:21, and note that at Mt. Sinai, which was supposed to be the dwelling-place of Jehovah, there is a great manifestation of Jehovah's power, and Moses gives to the people a series of commands which remain for all time as fundamental principles for righteous conduct. The remainder of chap. 20 and chaps. 21, 22, 23, 24 are chiefly enlargements and applications of these principles to later times when the people had already settled in Canaan and had become an agricultural people.

Thirty-second day. What then do we find to be the religious teaching of the first twenty-three chapters of the Book of Exodus? Recalling the constantly recurring phrase, "and Jehovah said," do we not feel with the writers of the book that we are reading the story of a series of great and providential acts; the separation of a people from hampering environment through the inspiration of a great leader, and the laying of the foundation of a religion which was destined to become a world-religion, perhaps *the* world-religion? Can we recall the heroism, the patience, the kindness, the far-reaching judgment, the tremendous self-command, the power to command others, the high ethical ideals of Moses, without ourselves being inspired, encouraged, and uplifted?

We shall see as we continue our work that no event in the history of Israel was so deeply graven on the hearts of the people as the deliverance from Egypt; and no man so impressed his personality and ideals upon them as Moses, their first great leader who bound them to Jehovah.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

READ CAREFULLY.—Answer questions, as far as possible, from memory. Then take your Bible and review with the questions in mind, revising your answers as you read. Should you wish to work for a certificate, procure from the office of the Institute duplicate blanks and return them. Certificates will be awarded all who answer fifteen questions. An Honor sign will be placed upon the certificates of all who answer twenty questions.

1. What is the general literary form of the Book of Genesis?.....

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2. Were these stories original with the authors of the book?.....

.....

3. In any case where a story is common to many nations in what important particular does the Hebrew story always differ from it?.....

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4. Name some of the great "origins" treated in the first eleven chapters.....

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5. Which of the stories containing an account of the beginning of man presents the most spiritual conception of God?.....

6. What is a better name for the second story, Gen. 2:5—3:24?.....

.....

7. What stories have to do with the origin of sacrifice? .....

.....

8. What with the origin of the Sabbath?.....

9. With what personages does Gen., chaps. 12–50, deal? .....

.....

10. Give an estimate of the character of Abraham.....

.....

.....

11. Do you think that the writer has as bad an opinion of Jacob as he would have had if he had been living in the twentieth century?.....

12. Do you find a definite religious teaching in the stories of Joseph? If so what?.....

.....

.....

13. Name what seem to you the two most important teachings of the Book of Genesis?.....

.....

.....

14. With what are the two different portions of the Book of Exodus concerned?.....

.....

.....

15. Who is the hero of the first twenty chapters?.....

16. Why does the author take it for granted that Moses was a magician?.....

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.....

17. What were the great qualities of Moses as a leader?.....

.....

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18. Which of the ten commandments seems to you the most far reaching and holding the highest ethical standard? .....

19. Do you think that Moses had a higher conception of God than Abraham?.....

20. What service in the cultivation of religion do these early stories serve today?.....

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STUDY II

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

THE WILDERNESS

§30. The census and the march.
Num. 1:1–3; 10:1–13, 29–36; 25:10–22.

§31. More organization.
Num. 11:1–35.

§32. A venture into the land and a serious repulse.
Num., chaps. 12, 13, 14.

§33. Conspiracy in camp, death and atonement.
Num., chaps. 16, 17.

§34. Nearing the end.
Num., chap. 20.

§35. The ancient soothsayer.
Num., chaps. 22–24.

§36. A warrior leader.
Num. 27:12–23.

§37 The death of Moses.
Deut., chap. 34.

§38. The contribution of Moses.

JOSHUA THE CONQUEROR

§39. Assuming command and reconnoitering.
Josh., chaps. 1, 2.

§40. Across the Jordan.
Josh., chaps. 3, 4.

§41. The capture of Jericho.
Josh. 5:13—6:27.

§42. Jehovah the captain of Israel's armies.
Josh., chap. 7.

§43. War, sacrifice, worship.
Josh., chap. 8.

§44. The crafty Gibeonites.
Josh., chaps. 9, 10.

§45. Joshua's last charge to the people.
Josh., chaps. 23, 24.

STORIES OF THE CONQUEST

§46. Judges as a book.

§47. Stories of oppression and deliverance.
Judg., chap. 3.

§48. A battle and a heroine.
Judg., chap. 4.

§49. An old war song.
Judg., chap. 5.

§50. The rise of Gideon.
Judg., chap. 6.

§51. Craft and victory.
Judg. 7:1—8:28.

§52. An old fable.
Judg., chap. 9.

§53. The daughter of Jephthah.
Judg., chap. 11.

§§54, 55. Samson, the strong.
Judg., chaps. 13–16.

§56*a*. A stolen priest.
Judg., chap. 17.

§56*b*. The responsibility of man.
Review.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY

NUMBERS, JOSHUA, JUDGES

NUMBERS

The three books which we shall study this month, with the books of Genesis and Exodus, form a continuous history and story narrative with the insertion of occasional long expositions of legal or churchly matters, i. e., laws relating to worship.

If we continually bear in mind that in Israel no distinction was possible between matters relating to religion, and historical events, since the supreme ruler of Israel was God, we appreciate how in the biblical writings historical events are reported as the direct effect of Jehovah's action. It was perfectly consistent therefore that these writers should mingle regulations concerning worship indiscriminately with their political history and stories of their great national leaders. Since, however, certain books deal almost exclusively with laws, we may postpone for the present the consideration of the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy which belong to this class, and continue our study of the books in which history and story predominate.

First day. §30. Read Num. 1:1–3, the account of the event which gives the book its name. Glance over chaps. 1–10, and note that they are all devoted to statutes concerning worship. Pass them therefore, and read 10:1–13, the record of the advance of Israel from Sinai after a long sojourn there. Read vss. 29–32, and consider the desire of Moses to secure a guide who was familiar with the dangers and the paths of the desert; vss. 33–36, the order of march, the Ark always in front. See Exod. 25:10–22 for a description of the Ark and remember that it was the symbol of Jehovah's presence, becoming as the people passed on in their journey the receptacle of those things which seemed to them most sacred, probably having in it at this time the tablets of stone upon which the ten commandments (or "words," as they are called in the Hebrew text) of Moses were chiseled.[1]

Second day. §31. Read Num. 11:1–35, and note the difficulties of Moses and the appointment of the seventy elders to assist him. Consider especially the character of Moses as indicated in vss. 24–29.

Third day. §32. Read Num. 12:16–32; 13:17–33, noting the discoveries made by the messengers sent to bring a report of the land toward which the people were journeying (*a*) concerning the fruitful land, (*b*) containing fortified cities, (*c*) populated by different tribes some of whom seemed to the messengers like the giants of old.

[1] The famous Code of Hammurabi, a law code thus engraved on stone and antedating Moses by perhaps five hundred years, was found in Susa as a result of excavations in Persia. This proved when deciphered a very elaborate code containing laws probably coming from a Babylonian king, Hammurabi, *circa* 2000 B. C. The contents of this code may be studied in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. V.

Read chap. 14, and note vss. 1–3, the failure of courage; vss. 4–10, the staunch courage of Joshua and Caleb; vss. 10–12, the anger of Jehovah at the doubt and fear of the people; vss. 13–19, Moses' plea; vss. 20–28, the decree of punishment against all grown men except Joshua and Caleb; vss. 29–45, the impetuous repentance of the people and their repulse by the Amalekites.

Third day. §33. Read chap. 16, the record of further difficulties of Moses and the actual rebellion and conspiracy of a portion of the people. Note in vss. 31–34 the temporary suppression of discontent by earthquake and fire, and later, in vss. 41–45, the prevention of the complete extermination of the people by the prompt action of Aaron in making priestly atonement for them, not, however, before many had died of a terrible plague.

Read 17:1–11 and note that the rod of Aaron is henceforth to be a visible sign of the authority of Jehovah in Aaron.

Fourth day. §34. Read Num. 20:1–13. The Hebrew writers believed that it was on account of something amiss in the spirit of Moses in connection with this event that he was not permitted to enter the land of Canaan, but let us consider that Moses had become an old man, that Miriam his sister was dead, that Aaron had already died, vss. 22–29, and that the greatest leader of all must of necessity soon leave his work to others for completion. Look up on the map the location of Edom and Moab and read 20:14–21, the application for a passage to Canaan through Edom, with whom the Israelites claim kinship, vs. 14.

Chap. 21 contains, in addition to the story of the fiery serpent (this also became a relic and was carried in the Ark), some bits of ancient Hebrew folk-songs, vss. 14, 15; a quotation from an ancient book, vss. 17, 18; a "well song," of which we may suppose there were many since the well was such an important factor in the life of a shepherd people, living in a land where water was difficult to find, vss. 27–30; and an old war song. The conquest of the territory of the Amorites is recorded in vss. 21–27 and of Og, king of Bashan, in vss. 31–35.

Fifth and sixth days. §35. Read chap. 22, and consider the alarm of the kings of Midian and Moab at the oncoming of Israel after their defeat of the Amorites, and the consultation of Balaam, a worshiper of Jehovah, a soothsayer from Pethor near the Euphrates, whose influence with Jehovah, it was hoped, could bring destruction upon Israel. Read chaps. 22, 23, 24, and note that all their efforts could draw from Balaam only blessings for Israel. These stories of Balaam give an interesting illustration of the ancient soothsayer who assumed himself to be wholly under the power of an exterior influence by whose leading he spoke almost mechanically the message of the spirit. He was among the Semitic people what the Oracle was to the Greeks and Romans. The word, "parable," used in 23:7, 18; 24:3, 15, might accurately be translated "oracle."

Seventh day. §36. Read Num. 26:1–4, and note that a second census of the people, a registration for military purposes, includes now, vss. 63–65, only Caleb and Joshua of those who had been enrolled in the first census.

Read Num. 27:12–14, the vision of the aged Moses in the mountain overlooking the land of promise, and, vss. 15–23, the choice and consecration of his successor, Joshua, a tried soldier. Consider the momentous character of this event. Up to this time the people had been under the leadership of one of the greatest minds, perhaps the greatest, if all the facts were known, which the nation ever produced. Compare in your own mind the character and ethical requirements of Jehovah, as conceived by Moses, with the childlike conception held by Abraham. Has there not been great advance? Try to formulate the evidences of such advance.

Eighth day. §37. The Book of Deuteronomy purports to contain the farewell addresses of Moses, but these are but a literary setting for the extensive code of laws which make the book a most important one in Israelitish history of a much later date. Its study will therefore be postponed under the supposition that there was an earlier account of Moses' last words to his people, which was current in Israel, and which was adopted and expanded as a framework for the Deuteronomic law.

Note, however, in Deut., chap. 34, the record of the death of Moses.

Ninth day. §38. Read carefully the directions for work for the preceding days. As we recall now the Book of Numbers do we clearly see that the writer is continuing the narration of what he deems the providentially ordered history of Israel; that under the hand of Jehovah working through Moses the elements of anarchy or discontent have been cast out, some degree of solidarity and race feeling has been secured, some skill in warfare has been attained, and the tribes are now eager to commence the conquest of the land, some of whose borders are already in their possession?

Were the Hebrew writers wrong in attributing to Jehovah the constant guidance of the wandering tribes and their leader, Moses? Does God act directly on human history? Perhaps the best answer to that question is to point to the Christian church today, and then, to recall that under the hand of Moses was born the mother-religion which in turn gave birth to Christianity. Moses gave to the thought of God a great ethical significance, a God who demanded not only worship but righteous conduct between man and man, even in thought. It is the picture of this man, Moses, wise, fearless, self-reliant, self-forgetting, living always his great ideals, and holding the mass of his people to them with power and vigor which supplies the teaching element in the Book of Numbers. The contemplation of such a life is full of the highest religious value.

JOSHUA

A study of the topographical map of Canaan will suggest some of the reasons why the conquest of the land of Canaan was a work of years and also why, after its conquest, it was yet many more years before there was sufficient unity among the tribes to bring any stable form of government.

Looking back upon this period the Hebrew writers saw in the varying fortunes of the people, the alternate rewards and punishments of Jehovah their God, and sought so to present the history of those troublous times as to teach the necessity of loyalty to Jehovah.

Two books give us accounts differing in details and evidently coming from different periods, but covering in general the period of the conquest. In the Book of Joshua, the great warrior hero, we find the cities falling one by one into his possession, a somewhat orderly and sometimes apparently miraculous conquest proceeding rapidly and systematically.

The impression gained from the writer of the Book of Judges is that of a more irregular, slow, and difficult conquest; both books, however, are clearly based upon ancient stories which have come down from very early times, each writer choosing those which best suited his purpose. Let us gather from a study of the books themselves something of this purpose.

Tenth day. §39. Read Joshua 1:1–9, the reassurance from Jehovah of continuous aid; vss. 10–15, the command of Joshua; vss. 16, 17, the acquiescence of the warriors; and vs. 18, the penalty of rebellion.

Read also chap. 2, the story of Rahab, doubtless one of the many stories which must have come down from ancient times about such a great event in the history of Israel as the taking of the first city on the west side of the Jordan. Note the character of the story, reading like an adventure of men living in a barbarous age.

Eleventh day. §40. Read Josh., chaps. 3, 4, relating the crossing of the Jordan. Consider in this account the very large place which is given to the priestly work, the formal arrangement of the tribes, the drying up of the Jordan at the touch of the priestly feet, the twelve memorial stones according to the number of the tribes. Does it not seem that the old story of the crossing of the Jordan, which may have been accompanied by a simple religious ceremony, has here been presented by one who had lost sight of the barbarity of the times and the irregularity of the conquest, and wished to exalt the priestly office and to make the ceremonial side of Israel's religion prominent?

Twelfth day. §41. Read Josh. 5:13—6:27, and note the account of the capture of Jericho in which the priests and the Ark are the most important features. Is it not significant of the writer's purpose that he should have chosen this particular story of the taking of Jericho (of which there may have been many others) which lays such emphasis upon religious ceremonial?

Thirteenth day. §42. Read Josh., chap. 7, and note that the writer looks upon Jehovah as the true leader of the armies of Israel and the spoils as belonging to him. Achan who covets and appropriates certain spoils, with all his family, is made a sacrifice to avert the anger of Jehovah.

Fourteenth day. §43. Read Josh., chap. 8, and note the second and successful attempt to capture Ai, this with every precaution to duly recognize the guidance of Jehovah. The peaceful picture contained in vss. 30–35, following the barbaric scenes of the ambush, the taking of the city, and the slaying of the king of Ai, seems incongruous, but to the writer of this book to whom warfare in the conquest of Jehovah's land was an act equally religious with sacrifice and worship, there was no incongruity.

Fifteenth day. §44. Read Josh., chap. 9, and note the story of the naïve stratagem of the Gibeonites to secure by covenant a peace with Israel and Israel's God, which seemed to them desirable in view of her recent conquests, but (10:1–11) drawing upon Gibeon thereby the displeasure of the great kings of the Amorites or Canaanites, headed by the king of Jerusalem, who were, however, defeated by Joshua, and further discomfited by a great hailstorm. Notice also fragments of the account in vss. 12–15, 16–21, 22–27.

Sixteenth day. §45. Had we time to study the entire Book of Joshua we should see that the remainder of the book contains the stories of further victories, the extent of Joshua's work being summed up in 12:7–24. Then follows the story of the division of the land among the twelve tribes upon a plan ascribed to Moses, preceding the death of Joshua, the establishment of the cities of refuge (chap. 20), special direction for the care and support of the priestly families, establishment of peaceful relations between the tribes which had settled east of the Jordan, and the main body of Israel in the west. Read in closing the charge of Joshua to the people (chaps. 23, 24). Consider what these two chapters teach as a résumé of the teaching of the book. Josh. 23:1–5, Jehovah is your God, Canaan his land; vss. 6–10, be loyal to him and he will fight for you; vss. 11–16, keep yourselves separate from the Canaanites in life and religion, and thereby prevent the anger of Jehovah; 24:1–15, you have seen how he has guided your history: choose now between him and the gods of your neighbors; vss. 16–28 record the choice of the people and the sealing of the covenant with the stone of witness. May we sum it up in the thought of the writer—Jehovah has removed every obstacle, smoothed every difficulty in the path of the people to the goal of their righteous desire. To him therefore let all Israel be faithful! His ministers or priests let all Israel follow! Let his covenant be held sacred! Let his ordinance of sacrifice be observed in connection with every event of life! Let there be no other gods beside him! Let the blood of his people be kept pure from intermingling with foreigners! These were teachings for the times, but can we overlook the fact that in the great feature of the recognition of the hand of God in human history, we have a teaching for modern nations and individuals which is of supreme value? With the book ends what is known as the Hexateuch, that is, the first six books of the Old Testament, which seem in their present form to have been the result of the compilation of ancient records and perhaps successive editings of the national traditions of the Hebrew people. Doubtless the stories were handed down from generation to generation as with other nations, but it remained for the prophets and priests of a later day when the religion of Jehovah had become a vital thing in the minds of the leaders of Israel, to interpret to the people this God-ordained history. To these men we owe our Bible.

JUDGES

Seventeenth day. §46. In the second book which presents stories of the conquest we have a writer who deals with the material in a very formal way. He leaves the stories just as he finds them, many of them barbaric, some of them without religious teaching in themselves, and sets them in a framework which expresses his own deep religious convictions, to expound which is his purpose in collecting the stories. It will perhaps seem to us that in these stories which are possibly among the oldest Israelitish stories, we

have a truer picture of the social, political, and religious condition of Israel than in the Book of Joshua, where so high an ideal of religious feeling is attributed to the conquering people.

As we enter upon the study of the book let us picture the tribes of Israel coming gradually into the land from beyond the Jordan, taking advantage of battle, stratagem, or social alliance to intrench themselves little by little in the already well-populated land, where cities abound, and where warlike tribes from the desert continually maraud and harass the inhabitants—a time of emigration, nomadic peoples becoming pastoral, seeking for the best lands for agriculture and pasturage, and invading every attractive land which seemed to them possible of conquest.

With this background in mind glance through Judg. 1:1—2:5, and note that the chapters contain history which duplicates in short form portions of Joshua, and serves as an introduction to the real Book of Judges, beginning with 2:6. Read 2:6–10, and note that the occurrences of this book are supposed to be somewhat remote from the days of Joshua, at least a generation. Read carefully vss. 11–15, for in them will be found the keynote of the compiler of the book, namely, that Jehovah will not tolerate another god, and that the misfortunes of the nation were to be attributed to Jehovah's anger because of the disloyalty of the people. Vss. 16–23 contain a preview of the history following and an epitome of the philosophy of history from the writer's point of view.

Eighteenth day. §47. Read Judg. 3:1–6, suggesting that the Hebrews had in many places formed friendly alliances with the inhabitants of the land and were dwelling peacefully among them. Note, however, in vss. 7–11 that the king of Mesopotamia becomes an oppressor from whom the brave Othniel delivers the people and gives peace in the land during his lifetime.

We must conclude that that was but a small section of the country and the judges local celebrities only. Read vss. 12–14, an account of the surrender to Eglon, king of Moab, and vss. 15–30, the swift and crafty deliverance by Ehud. Notice that in this case the usual formula of the compiler, "and the land had rest forty years," is doubled to eighty years, indicating a long period of peace after so important a victory. See also vs. 31 in which one verse serves to tell the whole story of servitude and deliverance from the Philistines, a people strongly intrenched upon the west coast of Palestine with whom Israel carried on wars of extermination ending only in David's time.

Nineteenth day. §48. Read Judg., chap. 4, the story of the struggle with one of the great Canaanitish kings. Study the map, and locate the regions mentioned. Note the topography, Deborah and Barak in the hill country, Sisera in the great plain. For information concerning the Kenites and their relation to Israel see Num. 10:29–32 and Judg. 1:16. Consider the formidable enemy, equipped with a large number of chariots, and the long period of oppression which brought rebellion. Notice that Deborah is a well-known character dwelling under a palm tree and accustomed to give counsel, perhaps, as a profession. Read the story as a *story*, and try to rewrite it. Does the writer say *how* the army was defeated?

Twentieth day. §49. The poem contained in chap. 5 tells the story of chap. 4 in poetic form, and since the celebration of great events in poetry in ancient times usually preceded prose accounts, as well as for linguistic reasons, we believe that we have in chap. 5 a very old, perhaps the oldest complete poem of Hebrew literature. Study it carefully, trying to feel the strength of the poetry. It would well repay memorizing. Do we also see in it some narrative not in chap. 4? Note vss. 2–11, the eager response of the people to the call to arms; vss. 4, 5, the suggestion of the discomfiting storm; vss. 6, 7, the dangerous highways; vss. 12–15, the particular tribes responding; vs. 16, the reluctance of Reuben, who with Gilead, Dan, and Asher remained at home. Compare in vss. 20, 21 the manner of the destruction of the army—a sudden storm, an overflowing river, a muddy valley rendering chariots useless.

Keeping in mind these new features as a part of your mental picture, read the poem as a whole again and enjoy its splendor and the climactic curse and blessing of the closing stanza.

Twenty-first day. §50. Read Judg. 6:1–6, and note the incursions of the south country people into the region of Ophrah (see map). Read vss. 11–18, the call of Gideon; vss. 19–24, the sacrificial test; vss. 25–27, the destruction of Baal, and the failure of Baal to "speak for himself." Read vs. 33, the invasion of the Midianites and Amalekites, being the occasion for which Gideon wished; vss. 36–40, the story of the sign which assured Gideon of Jehovah's favor.

Twenty-second day. §51. Read 7:1–22, the story of Gideon's stratagem to secure only the best soldiers, eager for battle, and his craftiness in handling them and the enemy; 7:23—8:4, the pursuit of the fleeing enemy and the slaughter of the kings. (8:4–21 gives another and different account of the same incident of Gideon's victory.) Read 8:22–28, the reward of Gideon and his rejection of the kingship.

Twenty-third day. §52. Read Judg., chap. 9, containing a story of the same region, the treason of Abimelech and the fable of Jotham, with its application to the story of Abimelech, itself a picture of the treachery and self-seeking of these barbarous times.

Twenty-fourth day. §53. Read the beautiful story of Jephthah, the outlaw, Judg. 11:1–3, and Jephthah's generous response to the appeal of his tribe, vss. 4–11. Read Jephthah's splendid putting of the case to the king of Ammon, vss. 12–28, and the holy zeal with which he entered upon the campaign, vss. 29–31; his triumph, vss. 32, 33, and vss. 34–40, the stern sense of obligation to his vow which compelled him to make a sacrificial offering of his own daughter, whose memory Israel cherished in an annual commemorative season, for many years.

Twenty-fifth day. §54. Quite different is the series of stories of the great hero, Samson, exploited in chaps. 13 to 16. Read chap. 13, and note that Samson was a child of promise and that from his birth he was destined to be a Nazarite, the Nazarite vow being to abstain (1) from wine, (2) from cutting of the hair, and (3) from approach to anything ceremonially unclean. In chap. 13 it will be noted that the stories picture a time when there was free social intercourse between the Philistines and the Hebrews, but a certain rivalry or antagonism which becomes later a fierce warfare for possession of the southwest coast of Palestine. In reading these stories of Samson, we must not look for religious

teaching any more than in other stories in the Book of Judges. The religious teaching lies in the use which the author of the book makes of the stories, rather than in the stories themselves. Let us therefore enjoy them simply as ancient stories. Note in chap. 14 the interesting story of the wedding of Samson, ending in the anger of Samson and the temporary desertion of his wife, who is given to a friend in his absence.

Twenty-sixth day. §55. Read the story in chap. 15 of Samson's attempt to revenge himself upon the people of his wife, bringing upon Judah the vengeance of the Philistines and upon Samson the displeasure of the people of Judah. Read chap. 16, relating the story of the treachery of Delilah, through which Samson is finally delivered to the Philistines. Note, however, that this demigod of the Hebrews at last secures his revenge at the same time with his own death, "so that the dead that he slew at his death were more than he slew in his life."

Twenty-seventh day. §56a. Read chaps. 17 and 18, a naïve account of the stealing of a priest by one of the migrating tribes, an old story which gives a vivid picture of the superstition of the times. It indicates that images were used in the worship of Jehovah; that a Levite was considered desirable as a priest; that a tribe or a city demanded a local priest; and that conduct and religion had very little to do with each other.

Twenty-eighth day. §56b. Shall we review now the Book of Judges, recalling the stories as we pass through the book? Read 3:7, 8, 11, 12, 15; 4:1–3, 23; 6:1, 2, 7–10; 8:28, and if you have time to do so go through the book taking each story and noting the comment made by the writer, showing his theory of the history of the Hebrews through this period. Does he not say clearly, "Jehovah is the God of Israel. He demands absolute loyalty. Jehovah permits his people when disloyal to fall into the hands of their enemies. Jehovah is able and willing to deliver his people from their enemies whenever they shall repent and return to him"? Note 21:25. Is this the historical picture of the author's point of view? Is it not his intention to present the old stories just as they were, as a true picture of the times, thus summarized in vs. 25? Is it not true that the people in those early times must have learned through the events of their lives the simple lesson of Jehovah's power as compared with the gods of other nations, and his faithfulness to loyal Israel? Do we need any further religious lesson as an offset to the dangerous principle that whatever man wills he may do? Does the author answer, "But for what man does, Jehovah holds him responsible to the extreme limit of his knowledge of right and wrong"?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

READ CAREFULLY.—Answer questions, as far as possible, from memory. Then take your Bible and review with the questions in mind, revising your answers as you read. Should you wish to work for a certificate, send for the duplicate blanks and return them to the office of the Institute, Hyde Park, Chicago, Ill. Certificates will be awarded all who answer fifteen questions. An Honor sign will be placed upon the certificates of all who answer twenty questions.

1. In what three books is the narrative of Exodus continued? .....

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2. Through what period do these books carry the history? .....

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3. What name is given to the first six books of the Bible considered as a group? .....

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4. Who is the hero of the Book of Numbers? .....

5. From what event does this book take its name? .....

6. Why did not the Hebrews at once enter upon the conquest of the land? .....

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7. When at last they were strong enough to undertake the conquest who became their leader? .....

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8. What are the characteristics of the Book of Joshua? .....

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9. In what book is the death of Moses recorded? .....

10. What two books relate the history of the settlement of the Hebrews in Palestine? .....

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11. As a history of the conquest does Joshua or Judges seem to you to give the truest account? .....

12. Can you see any reasons for supposing that the writer of the book of Joshua was interested in the priesthood? .....

13. Where do you find the stories of the taking of the first great Canaanitish city? .....

14. Why is it easy to discover the philosophy of the writer of the Book of Judges? .....

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15. Name three of the great heroes of the Book of Judges.....

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16. By a quotation picture the conditions of the times.....

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17. Describe the worship of the times as well as you can.....

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18. Give some of the literary characteristics of the Song of Deborah.....

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19. Who is the hero of the longest series of stories?.....

20. What do you consider to be the religious value of the Book of Judges?.....

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STUDY III

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

THE MAKING OF THE KINGDOM

§57. A consecrated child. I Sam. 1:1—2:11.
§58. A corrupt priesthood and an obedient boy. I Sam. 2:12—4:1.
§59. A great disaster. I Sam. 4:1–22.
§60. The ark with the enemy. I Sam. 5:1—7:2.
§61. The demand for a king. I Sam. 8:1–22.
§62. The anointing of Saul. I Sam. 9:1—10:16.
§63. Early stories of Saul. I Sam. 10:17–27; 11:1—12:25.
§64. A righteous statesman. I Sam., chap. 12.
§65. A presumptuous king. I Sam., chap. 13.
§66. Incidents of the war. I Sam., chap. 14.
§67. Samuel and Saul permanently estranged. I Sam., chap. 15.
§68. The anointing of the shepherd boy. I Sam., chap. 16.
§69. A victorious duel. I Sam., chap. 17.
§70. The jealous king and the popular hero. I Sam., chaps. 18, 19.
§71. Two friends. I Sam., chap. 20.
§72. David, the outlaw. I Sam., chaps. 21, 22.
§73. A loyal subject. I Sam., chaps. 23, 24
§74. Consulting the dead. I Sam. 28:3–25.
§75. The death of Saul and Jonathan. I Sam., chaps. 29, 30, 31.
§76 The succession of David. II Sam., chaps. 1–4.
§77. Organization and victories. II Sam., chap. 5.
§78. The Ark in Jerusalem. II Sam., chap. 6.
§79. Nathan's message concerning Jehovah's house. II Sam., chaps. 7, 8.
§80. The kingdom extended. II Sam., chaps. 8, 9, 10.
§81. A great sin and deep repentance. II Sam., chaps. 11, 12.
§82. Like father, like son. II Sam., chaps. 13, 14.
§83. Conspiracy, flight, and battle. II Sam. 15:1—17:14.
§84. A father's lament. II Sam., chap. 18.
§85. A restored court. II Sam., chaps. 19, 20.
§86. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Review.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY

I AND II SAMUEL

The Books of Samuel contain the most definitely historical writing of any which we have thus far studied. While the books take their name from the first hero whose deeds they record, the contents fall into three quite distinct sections, the first of which is devoted to the relations of Samuel to Saul, the second to Saul and David, and the third to David. As a background to the history of Israel, in this period we have always her enemies, the Philistines, who were in possession of the coast lands of Palestine in the southwest, and who fought long and bitterly to retain their possessions, but whom we find at the end of the period covered by these books completely conquered, driven out, or exterminated.

It is not chiefly to rehearse this history as such that the compiler of the Books of Samuel brings together a wonderful collection of stories and facts relative to the three principal characters in his book. It is rather a series of biographies of the three characters presented in such a manner as to show the conception of the author of the relation of these men to Jehovah, his dealings with them, and through them with the people of Israel. Let us bear this in mind as we take up the detailed study of the books.

First day. §57. Read I Sam. 1:1—2:11 and note that there is at Shiloh a sanctuary where at certain periods of the year people come to offer sacrifices and to pray, suggesting that in this period of Israel's history Jehovah is felt to be more accessible at such a sanctuary than elsewhere. Note also that the birth of Samuel is considered a direct answer to the prayer of his mother, and that his consecration to the service of Jehovah as one of the ministering children is not an isolated case, but in accordance with the custom of other ancient nations, many of whose priests were consecrated to that office from childhood. Does not this story indicate that there was in Israel at this time a class of people who were truly religious?

Second day. §58. Read I Sam. 2:12—4:1*a*. Study this section to discover some of the characteristics of the priesthood of this time. Consider that Eli represented the highest type and his sons perhaps the average. Note also the interesting priestly regulations, 2:12–17. Consider the strength and purity of the character of Samuel, who amid such surroundings grows up into a true enjoyment and fear of Jehovah (vss. 18, 21, 26). Note the indignation of Jehovah at the slackness of Eli's supervision of his sons and his determination to bring an end to the house of Eli. Read chap. 3 as a story, simple, tender, and affectionate, of the man who was soon to become a hero in this period of Israel's history. Consider this as a tribute to the integrity of his later years, and a preface to the statement of 3:19—4:1 through which we find that the honor of a spokesman of Jehovah, so early placed upon the shoulders of the boy, was continued with increasing responsibility and power until the name of Samuel became the great name in Israel.

Third day. §59. Read I Sam. 4:1*b*–22. Note the discouragement of the Israelites before the Philistines (vss. 1*b*, 2) their confidence that defeat was due to the absence of the Ark which carried with it the presence of Jehovah (vs. 3), the addition of the Ark with its priests to their forces (vss. 4, 5), the fear of the Philistines of the God of Israel whose name had gone forth through all the land (vss. 4–9), the defeat of the Hebrews and the taking of the Ark (vss. 10, 11). Upon hearing of the taking of the Ark of God, Eli faints and is killed by the fall (vss. 12–18). Do we see in this account still more clearly that priest and people regard God as local, and as manifesting himself in particular places and through material means, rendering the attitude of the people toward the Ark which was supposed to represent Jehovah almost a form of idolatry? It is well to study carefully the conception of God in each stage, since by it we shall trace most clearly and forcefully the marvelous development toward higher ideals of God and humanity through the succeeding centuries.

Fourth day. §60. Read I Sam. 5:1—7:2, a series of stories showing the superstitious reverence for the Ark both by the Philistines and Israelites through the twenty years in which the Ark was away from the center of worship.

Fifth day. §61. Read I Sam. 7:15–17, and note the interesting statement of the work of Samuel passing in a circuit from city to city, acting in each place as judge and priest. Read 8:1–22, and note that in Samuel's case as in Eli's, his sons do not follow in his footsteps but were unworthy sons, unfit to succeed to the office of the father. Consider, vss. 4–9, the desire on the part of the people for a kingdom. The nation was becoming centralized in cities. It was becoming conscious of itself and doubtless saw in the nations about it patterns of government which seemed more desirable than the leadership of a spokesman prophet of Jehovah. Samuel acquiesced in their wish although he himself saw great failure possible under a monarchical government.

Sixth day. §62. Read I Sam. 9:1—10:16, the story of the anointing of Saul. Consider especially the description of Saul (9:1, 2), and of Samuel as a public seer and foreteller accepting money for his services (9:6–14). Note in vss. 15–21 the suggestion that Samuel already knew of the selection of Saul and (vss. 22–27) treats him hospitably. Find in 10:1–16 the remainder of the story and note Saul's silence in regard to his future career.

Seventh day. §63. Read 10:17–27; 11:1–13; 11:14—12:25, all stories gathering about the coming of Saul into the kingship. From one of these it would seem that Saul was the choice of the people because of his apparent superior physical qualifications; from another because of his prowess in the matter of Jabesh-Gilead, and from the third as the result of a convention or assembly at Gilgal. These are not necessarily conflicting stories, but show us how the authors of these early books of the Bible made no attempt to harmonize the different stories, but placed them side by side, each giving their contribution to the religious purpose which was the chief consideration of the book.

Eighth day. §64. Re-read chap. 12, and note the splendid vindication of his administration made by Samuel (vss. 1–5) and his fear indicated by the remainder of the chapter that the new form of government will lead the people away from Jehovah (vss. 6–22). Note also in vs. 23 the generous co-operation promised by Samuel.

Ninth day. §65. Read I Sam. 13:1–15*a*, and note the first breach between Saul and Samuel because of the affront offered by Saul in assuming the right to sacrifice to Jehovah, a privilege which apparently belonged to Samuel or to the accepted priests of Jehovah. Read also vss. 15*b*–18 and vss. 19–23, the first indicating the strength of the Philistines numerically, and the second, the more advanced stage of civilization which provided implements of warfare of their own manufacture, while the Israelites were forced to go to other nations for their arms.

Tenth day. §66. Read 14:1–23, the story of the gallant defense of the pass of Michmash by Jonathan; the record of the victory (vss. 31–35); and in vss. 24–30, 36–42, 43–46, a story of an incident in these series of battles illustrating the superstitious confidence placed in the casting of lots. Note in vss. 47–49 a résumé of the battles of Saul.

Summing up the stories thus far, do we not see in the mind of the writer of these records his sympathy with the close relationship between Jehovah and his people in the theocratic government of Samuel? Is this the beginning of the struggle between prophets and kings, which lasted through centuries, in which the power of the prophet reaches its climax in Israel with Isaiah and passes from prophet to priest in a later period, the kingship in Israel being always a dependent position under Jehovah, the real power?

Eleventh day. §67. Read I Sam., chap. 15, the beginning of a new section of the book and the record of the permanent estrangement of Samuel and Saul, noting that here also it is for an offense against Jehovah that Samuel condemns the king.

Twelfth day. §68. Read chap. 16, the story of the anointing of David, who was doubtless known to Samuel in his annual pilgrimage to Bethlehem (vss. 1–13), and the story (vss. 14–23) of a meeting of Saul and David, the chronological place of which we cannot determine since in the next chapter David appears as a stranger to Saul.

Thirteenth day. §69. Read chap. 17, the story of David and the Philistine champion. Note that this story gives a good example of the ancient custom of allowing a champion from each of two opposing armies to represent his entire army in a duel, to decide the question of victory.

Fourteenth day. §70. Read chaps. 18, 19, and note various stories of the hero David, the friendship with Jonathan (vss. 1–5), his great popularity (vss. 6–9), the jealousy of Saul (vss. 10–16), his marriage to Michal, Saul's daughter, and the grim dowry which the king required in the hope that David would lose his life in securing it (vss. 17–29), Jonathan's friendly intervention (19:1–7), Saul, however, always playing false to his promises, the escape of David (vss. 8–17), his pursuit by Saul (vss. 18–24).

Fifteenth day. §71. Read chap. 20, a beautiful account of the strong affinity between Jonathan and David, the unselfish admiration of Jonathan and David's longing for friendly companionship, leading to a permanent covenant between the two.

Sixteenth day. §72. Read chaps. 21, 22, stories of David's outlaw life bringing him at last into the country of the Philistines.

Seventeenth day. §73. Read chaps. 23, 24, further stories of Saul's pursuit of David. Note especially in chap. 24 the illustration of the attitude of reverence which David held toward the king and his people, although that king was his own most bitter enemy. Note again in this chapter another one of Saul's spells of temporary repentance.

Eighteenth day. §74. Note the death of Samuel recorded in 25:1. Read in I Sam. 28:3–25 the story of Saul's seeking through supernatural means to consult the dead Samuel, having no other means of direct communication with Jehovah, upon whom he must depend for the victory of his armies. This is an illustration of the very narrow conception of Jehovah which belonged to Saul.

Nineteenth day. §75. Read chaps. 29, 30, 31, and II Sam., chap. 1, recording the last battle of Saul with the Philistines, his defeat, the reception of the news by David, and the beautiful song of lament over the death of Saul and Jonathan.

Twentieth day. §76. Read II Sam., chaps. 1–4, and note that David first becomes king over Judah with a capital at Hebron (2:1–4); that a second kingdom under Saul's son is established with a capital at Mahanain (vss. 8–10); that there was long war between the descendants of Saul and the House of David (3:1), and that after seven years, Abner, overreaching himself in the house of Saul, loses favor, and David finally peaceably takes possession of the entire kingdom (3:17–21), Joab, David's chief captain, having taken the precaution to slay Abner (3:22–39). The only remaining descendant of Saul was a cripple (4:4) of whom we learn more later (2:11).

Twenty-first day. §77. Note in II Sam. 5:1–5 the formal confirmation of David as king (vss. 6, 7), the fortification of Jerusalem (vss. 8–10), the building of a great palace (vss. 11, 12), the establishment of a royal harem (vss. 13–16), victories over the Philistines (vss. 17–25).

Twenty-second day. §78. Read now the interesting story found in chap. 6 of the removal of the long-abandoned Ark to the capital at Jerusalem, in accordance with David's belief that Jehovah was with the Ark, and that his city would be safe and blessed only when the Ark of Jehovah was appropriately housed within it. Study this chapter carefully as a description of an ancient religious procession.

Twenty-third day. §79. Read chaps. 7, 8, and note the official prophet Nathan as a member of the establishment of David, the yearning of David to build a house for Jehovah appropriate to his gratitude for the blessings which he has received, a wish, however, which the prophet deems inappropriate since David has been a man of war. Note in chap. 8 a résumé of the wars of David and his victories. Run quickly through I Sam., chap. 15, to II Sam., chap. 8, recalling the preference of Samuel for David, the early exploits of David and his great popularity, the jealousy of Saul and its consequences to David, the friendship of David and Jonathan, the death of Saul and the return of David to his own land as king of Judah, the enlargement of his kingdom to include all Israel, the systematic organization of the kingdom by David and the gratitude of the king to Jehovah for his continuous guidance and blessing. Do we not see as we recall this material that the course of the lives of Saul and David was the legitimate outcome of the character of each, and that the strength of David was ever being reinforced by his reliance upon Jehovah, and his belief in himself as a man living as nearly as possible according to his highest ideals? In Saul, on the other hand, we see a man whose aim is always clouded by his fear that another will surpass him. He is a great warrior, it is true, but his nature is not large enough, or generous enough, to tolerate a member of his court who may be more popular than himself. The aim of our author may be and doubtless was to glorify Israel's greatest king, but he has so truly set forth the facts and stories of the two men, David and Saul, that no comment is necessary to show us that the author's preference is justified.

Twenty-fourth day. §80. The remainder of our book of II Sam. is occupied with the story of David's later life. Remembering the splendid career of David in his progress up to the throne of all Israel, let us raise the question as we read the story of the remainder of his life, Why did the author, to whom David was the greatest king of Israel, the chosen of Jehovah, the man who through all the centuries to come, would stand as the type of the ideal king, relate the damaging story of his later life? Read II Sam., chap. 9, and note that David, now being king of all Israel and having formally organized his kingdom (8:15–18), looks about him for any descendant of Saul's house who may be left, and for the sake of his old friendship for Jonathan adopts into his house the lame son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth. Read chap. 10, and note that he extends his conquests under Joab as the captain of his hosts into Syria (consult the map), thus extending the limits of his kingdom beyond those of any king who succeeded him.

Twenty-fifth day. §81. Read chap. 11, noting (vs. 1) that David no longer himself goes into battle but, trusting his wars to his great captain Joab, he remains in Jerusalem his capital, the beloved king of his people, rich, powerful, blessed of Jehovah; but read the story of David's treachery toward Uriah, one of his favorite generals, contained in 11:2–26. In considering this chapter let us not forget that such an act in an oriental monarch and absolute despot was doubtless not uncommon. In view of the lightness with which this sin might have been regarded in David's day, note the comment of the author (11:27*b*) and the continuance of the story in 12:1–25. Is it not significant that in this early day the true ethical significance of David's act should be so clearly and forcefully impressed upon him by Nathan, whose office it was to communicate to David the messages of his God? Is it not also significant as an indication of the high ideals of David himself that the repentance so graphically described in vss. 16–23 should have the ring of genuine repentance for a wrong deed, rather than a cry of pain under punishment? We shall see as we proceed that the later life of David appears under the hand of our author as a direct result of the situation described in chaps. 11, 12.

Twenty-sixth day. §82. Chap. 13 records a violation of family law which led to a mortal enmity between two sons of David, Absalom and Amnon. Read 13:23–37, the story of the murder of Amnon by Absalom and the flight of Absalom to Geshur. Read 14:1–23, the story of the means by which Joab brought about the recall of Absalom to Jerusalem, although not to the king's presence, but how,

after two years, the handsome and popular Absalom succeeded in effecting a reconciliation with his father.

Twenty-seventh day. §83. Read chap. 15, the story of the conspiracy of Absalom (vss. 1–12), and the flight of the king from Jerusalem (vss. 13–23). Study the humility and loyalty which prompts the king (vss. 24–29) to return the Ark to Jerusalem with its priests.

Twenty-eighth day. §83. Read 15:30–37, recording the loyalty of Hushai; 16:15—17:14, the success of Hushai in defeating the council of Absalom's chief advisor. Note that by Hushai's advice Absalom himself goes into battle.

Twenty-ninth day. §84. Read chap. 18, the story of the death of Absalom, one of the most perfect pictures of the love of a father for a son, in all literature.

Thirtieth day. §85. Read 19:1–23, the story of the return of David to Jerusalem and 20:23, a summary of the restored court of David.

For lack of time we must leave the remainder of the book, noting only the story contained in 23:13–17, a story of the early wars of David, which, however, is a noble testimony to the generosity and chivalry of David, the water brought at the risk of the lives of his friends being too precious for any use but that of a libation to Jehovah.

Thirty-first day. §86. Shall we recall now the entire contents of the Books of Samuel, making an index of those books by chapter titles? Study this index. Do we see, historically, Israel passing from an unorganized tribal occupation of isolated sections of Palestine, to a kingdom and a territory greater in extent than at any later period? Do we see the establishment of a capital at Jerusalem, of a court sanctuary, and the systematic government of the people under a wise king, placing the nation above surrounding nations of much longer monarchical experience?

Ethically what advance has been made? Still the author says to us, "Jehovah did thus and so," but we do not now see, as in the Book of Judges, the persons moved almost automatically as pawns upon a chess board, but we see rather characters working out their own life-history according to a certain conception of God which they possessed. Does not the author recognize Jehovah's work in human history? Yes, for Jehovah chooses men to carry out his purposes: he chooses men qualified for the special service which the world needs, but such election does not prevent the chosen ones from exercising their own free will. Even the greatest hero of the Old Testament, when he set aside for a moment his high ideals, is held responsible by Jehovah, and reaps through years of sorrow the penalty of broken laws. Can we now answer the question with which our study of the twenty-fourth day opened? Does the prophet writer hold before the people of his day the great principle with its reward and its penalty: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap"?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

READ CAREFULLY.—Answer questions, as far as possible, from memory. Then take your Bible and review with the questions in mind, revising your answers as you read. Should you wish to work for a certificate, send for the duplicate blanks and return them to the office of the Institute, Hyde Park, Chicago, Ill. Certificates will be awarded all who answer fifteen questions. An Honor sign will be placed upon the certificates of all who answer twenty questions.

1. What is the value of the Books of Samuel compared with the Pentateuch as historical material?....

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2. Is the historical purpose the chief purpose of the writer?.....

3. With what conditions at Shiloh does the book open?.....

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4. What people are the chief enemies of Israel in this period and where were they located?.....

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5. Where was Samuel trained for his work?.....

6. Describe the work of Samuel as circuit priest, judge, and seer.....

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7. What was the form of government under Samuel?.....

8. Who was Israel's first king?.....

9. How was he chosen?.....

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10. What did he accomplish for Israel?.....

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11. What was his relation to David?.....

12. Do you think that the author of the book considered a king a desirable institution?.....

13. How did David finally succeed to the throne?.....

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14. Characterize David as a young man.....

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15. What did he accomplish in the expansion of his kingdom?.....

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16. What in the establishment of a court?.....

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17. What in the promotion of religion?.....

18. What estimate did the writer of the book pass upon the sin of his old age?.....

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19. Why did he tell this sad story of his hero?.....

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20. What in general is the religious teaching of the writers of the Books of Samuel?.....

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STUDY IV

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

THE KINGDOM AND THE EARLY PROPHETS

§87. The succession of Solomon.
I Kings, chap. 1.
§88. The king's last charge to his successor.
I Kings, chap. 2.
§89. Solomon strengthens the kingdom by foreign alliance.
I Kings, chap. 3.
§90. Internal government and society.
I Kings, chap. 4.
§91. Plans for the temple.
I Kings, chap. 5.
§92. The building of the temple.
I Kings, chaps. 6, 7.
§93. The dedication.
I Kings, chaps. 8, 9.
§94. Solomon's home life.
I Kings, chaps. 10, 11.
§95. Northern Israel rebels on Solomon's death, and the kingdom is divided.
I Kings, chap. 12.
§96. Various events in both kingdoms.
I Kings, chaps. 14–16.
§97. Elijah and Jehovah, *vs.* Ahab, Jezebel, and Baal.
I Kings, chaps. 17, 18, 19.
§ 98. War between Syria and Israel.
I Kings, chaps. 20–22.
§ 99. Elisha and the Syrian wars.
II Kings, chaps. 1–10.
§100. The prosperous reign of Jereboam II.
II Kings 14:23–29; chap. 15.
§101. What Amos saw in Israel.
Selections from Amos.
§102. A visit to Bethel.
Amos, chap. 7.
§103. The doom of the nations.
Amos, chaps. 1, 2.
§104. Samaria shall fall.
Amos 3:9—4:3.
§105. Unheeded warnings will bring captivity.
Selections from chaps. 4, 5, 7–9.
§106. Jehovah will punish sin.
§107. Changes in northern Israel and the work of Hosea.
II Kings 15:8–16 and the Book of Hosea.
§108. Punishment necessary but abandonment impossible.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY

I KINGS, II KINGS, CHAPS. 1–18, AMOS, HOSEA

THE BOOKS OF THE KINGS

In taking up the study of the Books of Kings let us recall the general principle which we have found to control the writing of the annals of the previous period, namely, the desire of the author or compiler to present certain religious truths. Although the Books of Kings purport to be the records of the kings of Israel and of Judah, for we shall see that the kingdom of David was divided at the death of his son, Solomon, we may expect to find in these records of the kings such a choice of material and such a presentation of the annals and stories as best serves the teaching purpose of the authors.

Turn to the introduction to this course and read all that is there given concerning the prophet and his work as it is related to the literature of the Old Testament, recalling the fact that the chief writers concerned in the Books of Kings are of the prophetic type.

First day. §87. Read I Kings, chap. 1, and note the fact that in David's old age his eldest son Adonijah presumes to exalt himself and prepare for his inheritance of the kingdom (vss. 5–9), but that (vs. 10) certain important persons in the kingdom, Nathan, and his own brother, Solomon, seemed to be antagonistic to him. Note in vss. 11–14 and 22–27 that David had already chosen Solomon as his successor, and that his purpose was known to Nathan, and to the mother of Solomon, Bethsheba. Read vss. 28–40, the reassurance of Bethsheba and the proclamation of Solomon as king; vss. 40–53, the announcement to Adonijah.

Second day. §88. Read I Kings, chap. 2. Consider vss. 1–4, the charge of David to Solomon, containing a strong presentation of the religious philosophy of David, namely, so long as the Hebrew people are loyal to Jehovah, following his precepts in civil and religious life, prosperity will follow. Is not this a clear indication that David himself so interpreted his own prosperity, and that he believed that the great kingdom, which it was his privilege to bestow on his son, was the result of his conscientious adherence to the law of his God? Read vss. 10–12, recording the death of David and the establishment of his son upon the throne. The remainder of the chapter gives a résumé of the acts of Solomon preparatory to carrying out his own ideas of a great kingdom.

Third day. §89. Read I Kings, chap. 3, in which it will be seen, vs. 1, that Solomon united to Israel the influence of Egypt by marrying the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt; vs. 2, that because there was no temple, people still worshiped on the ancient high-places, one of which (vs. 4) was located at Gideon. Read vss. 5–15, and note that at the commencement of his reign Solomon recognizes himself as being the instrument in the hand of Jehovah for the furtherance of his kingdom. Vss. 16–28 contain an interesting story which suggests that even more than his father David, Solomon concerned himself with the everyday life of his people, and gained for himself a great reputation for the justice of his administration.

Fourth day. §90. Read I Kings, chap. 4, in which (vss. 1–6) the organization of the court of Solomon is described; in vss. 7–19 note the division of the land for taxation necessary to support the establishment of the king, which is apparently extensive. (See vss. 20–28.) The résumé of the wisdom of Solomon (vss. 29–34) is extremely interesting as an indication of the kind of wisdom sought after among oriental people of his day, i. e., "proverbial" wisdom, a superficial knowledge of nature, the ability to make popular songs, etc. It will be remembered that so great was the reputation of Solomon for this kind of wisdom that later tradition ascribed to him much of the Old Testament literature, such as the Book of Proverbs, the Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes. In the same manner was ascribed to Moses, because of his great wisdom in matters of law and government, the legal literature of the Hebrews.

Fifth day. §91. Read chap. 5, and note the preparations for carrying out the wish of David, that a suitable temple for Jehovah should be built in the capital, Jerusalem. Note that Hiram, king of Tyre, is the man chosen to supply the building materials, and that the kingdom of Solomon furnished the workmen who were sent in large numbers to the Lebanons to cut trees "after the manner of the Sidonians," and to bring them to Jerusalem to be used in the building of the temple.

Sixth day. §92. Note that in the fourth year of his reign Solomon begins the building of the house in which (6:11–13) Jehovah has promised to dwell, providing only that his statutes shall continually be kept. Vss. 2–10 and 14–37 describe the house, which, however, it is difficult for us to restore in our imagination. Note further, in chap. 7, that Solomon's own house occupied thirteen years in building, while his building of the temple occupied seven years. May we not conclude that the building operations of Solomon were very extensive? Note in vss. 7–51 that the furniture of the temple was of the most precious material. Do we see in this effort of Solomon a desire to place himself and his kingdom on an equal footing with the oriental kingdoms about him?

Seventh day. §93. Read chaps. 8, 9, the story of the bringing of the Ark into the temple (vss. 1–11); the ceremonies of dedication (vss. 12 ff.); the prayer of Solomon (vss. 22–53), voicing the dependence of Solomon upon Jehovah, and Solomon's charge to the people (vss. 54–61); the whole being completed by elaborate sacrifices and feasting (vss. 62–66). Note, however (chap. 9), that Jehovah appears to Solomon again, not in the temple but in Gibeon, indicating that even after the temple was built worship upon the high-places still continued. The passage 9:10–28 throws further light upon the glory of Solomon's reign.

Eighth day. §94. Read the story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba contained in 10:1–13, as a picture of oriental hospitality, entertainment, and social life, and see further details of the riches and wisdom of Solomon (vss. 14–29). But read chap. 11, in which we shall find indications that the prosperity of Solomon was not conducive to his close relationship to Jehovah; that in his extensive harem were many women from other peoples, and in coming to Jerusalem they brought with them their religions, so that, in vs. 5, we see Solomon aiding them in the worship of their gods, and in vss. 7, 8, building high-places and temples for many gods of other peoples. This authorized invasion of idolatry gave fresh impetus to the fight for the worship of Jehovah alone in Israel, which lasted through centuries, and which was carried on by prophets and priests alike. Note that the writer of the Books of Kings represents that in his anger at Solomon Jehovah brings enemies (vss. 14–23); and in vss. 26–40 we find the story of the conspiracy of Jeroboam, who, although obliged to flee for his life to Egypt, remains there only until the death of Solomon.

Ninth day. §95. Read chap. 12, the story of the succession of Rehoboam, the journey to Shechem, one of the northern cities, to receive there the oath of allegiance of the people, the protest of the north tribes led by Jeroboam against the heavy taxation, the defiance of Rehoboam ending in the rebellion of the northern tribes and the division of the kingdom, Rehoboam returning to his capital at Jerusalem and Jeroboam setting up his kingdom at Shechem (vss. 1–25). But since the northern kingdom contained no temple Jeroboam thinks it necessary to provide a royal sanctuary which will help to consolidate his people. Read in vss. 25–33 the story of the setting-up of the calf-worship. Let us not suppose that this was pure idolatry, but rather that in the symbol of the calves northern Israel saw Jehovah, and was simply substituting for the Ark of Jerusalem another symbol of the power and presence of Jehovah, but a symbol that was so closely allied to the idolatrous worship of Egypt and of the surrounding nations that it was considered by the writer of the book a great crime against Jehovah, and the cause of national disaster. See vss. 33, 34 in which it is also related that Jeroboam drew his priests from all the tribes and not from the special consecrated tribe, which, to the writer of the book, was also a sin.

Tenth day. §96. Read 14:1–19, the story of the curse of the house of Jeroboam by a prophet of God, and the death of Jeroboam recorded in vss. 19, 20. Note that in the southern kingdom Rehoboam has also permitted the introduction of foreign gods (vss. 21–24), and that the king of Egypt has made a successful foray against Jerusalem, and carried away extensive treasures from the temple (vss. 25–28); that at the death of Rehoboam he is succeeded by Abijah, his son, who continues the struggle of the south to gain again the north territory, and to establish a united Israel with the capital at Jerusalem (14:29—15:8). He, in turn, is succeeded by his son, Asa. Vs. 11 assures us that Asa was of a different character from his ancestors, that he destroyed the foreign gods (vss. 12–15), and received assurance of the favor of Jehovah. The war between northern and southern Israel in his day, however (vss. 16–22), was extensive, and indicates that Syria had made a friendly alliance with Judah, and assisted in the defeat of the king of Israel. It is not necessary for us to follow in detail the history of northern and southern Israel from king to king. We should notice, however, that in 16:1–4 we are told that the house of Jeroboam is visited by the curse pronounced in his own day, and that a period of anarchy follows, ending at last in the establishment of Omri, the captain of the Israelitish army (16:16), as king of Israel, whose kingdom was fully gained (vs. 21) only after the defeat of a rival pretender Tibni (vs 22). The reign of Omri is particularly notable in Israel for the change of the capital to Samaria, the city which was the central point of Israelitish history for later generations. The great political importance of the reign of the House of Omri, represented by himself and his son, Ahab, is not easily to be gathered

from the biblical account, since these kings are under severe censure from the writer of the book because of their attitude toward Jehovah. But we note (vs. 23) that Omri reigned twelve years, that Ahab (vs. 29) reigned twenty-two years, that he was at peace with his northern enemies, having married Jezebel, a Sidonian princess, and that on the south he had rebuilt Jericho. His doom, however, is sealed by the prophetic writer in vs. 33.

Eleventh day. §97. At this stage of our work we shall take up the study of the first great prophetic figure whose story is known to us, that of the prophet Elijah. We have seen that in Samuel's day the prophet was a seer, foretelling events, and, for money, giving advice. In all probability this professional work of the prophet was always a feature in Israel. Perhaps the number of prophets who gained their living by giving advice had increased, since we read of schools of the prophets, or, as we should term them, prophetic guilds. We shall also recall that in the court of David was a prophet, Nathan, who was regularly consulted, and that in the following reign, both in northern and southern Israel, there have been occasional appearances of prophets. We must, however, begin at this time to distinguish between the prophets who belong to the soothsaying class, even though believing themselves to represent Jehovah (in later times sometimes called false prophets), and those men who stand out in the history of Israel as the great teachers who, under Jehovah, carried the people from generation to generation through a steadily developing process to a continually higher and higher conception of God. The term "prophet" means "speaker for God," and to these great figures in Israel's history the name properly belongs. Read now chaps. 17, 18, 19, and 21, containing the splendid stories of Elijah, 17:1, his sudden and portentious appearance at the court of Ahab, followed (vss. 2–7) by his voluntary exile, and (vss. 8–24) by his emergence in Sidon. In studying the miracles attributed to Elijah and Elisha we should not spoil the story by raising a question of their possibility. We must remember that about the names of all great men gather anecdotes and stories. We should hardly interpret these miracle-stories, however, with the same literalness as the stories of the gospels, since they occurred in an age when miracle-stories were common in regard to all heroes, and when slight exaggerations of current stories, founded in fact, could easily put on the appearance of miracles. To the writer they are the attestation of the power and authority of Elijah as a prophet, and since their possibility is beyond the realm of investigation we should accept them simply as beautiful stories illustrating the reverence in which these men were held. 18:1–20 recounts the story of the return of Elijah to Samaria, although in full knowledge of the persecution of the prophets of Jehovah which had been conducted at the instigation of Jezebel, and (vss. 16–40) the magnificent arraignment of Baal and triumph of Jehovah, according to the spectacular scheme of Elijah. We should bear in mind that the great question at issue in this period is not the question of Jehovah as against all other gods in the world, but the question of the worship of any other god than Jehovah *in Israel.* The contribution of the prophet of this period to the conception of the character of Jehovah is "no God but Jehovah for Israel." In vss. 41–46 we find the drought ended, and, in 19:1–18, Elijah, who has fled from the vengeance of Jezebel, is encouraged by Jehovah. Upon his return he anoints a usurper for the throne and in anticipation of his death, bestows his prophetic mantle upon Elisha. Chap. 21 gives us another splendid picture of Elijah, this time as a champion of the cause of freedom and democracy in Israel. Ahab, desiring forcibly to appropriate for his own pleasure the inheritance of a free Israelite, Naboth, is thwarted by Elijah, and receives the curse of Jehovah, although this curse (vs. 29) is not to take effect in his own day, but, rather, in the day of his son.

Twelfth day. §98. Note in chap. 20 that the king of Syria comes against Samaria (vs. 1), demands its surrender, and is defeated in battle (vs. 21), but returns (vs. 26), and in battle at Aphek is again defeated, Ahab making a covenant with Ben Hadad. Read 22:1, and note that the war was suspended for three years, and that (vss. 2–4) Ahab and the king of Judah, Jehosaphat, go out against the king of Syria, and (vs. 29) King Ahab, having himself gone into the battle in disguise (vs. 30), is fatally wounded by a bow drawn at a venture (vss. 31–36), and is brought to Samaria for burial, his son, Ahaziah, reigning in his stead.

Thirteenth and fourteenth days. §99. Have we not discovered from our study of I Kings that in the minds of the writers of the book, from the days of the division of the kingdom, the importance of the kings of Israel is, in comparison with the prophets, small? The space devoted to any one king is insignificant in comparison with that devoted to the stories of the great prophet, Elijah. Could we have studied the material more thoroughly we should have found other stories of the prophets which are much more extended than the accounts of the kings. Do we not see that the writer is telling us not the story of the kings of Israel, but the story of the dealings of Jehovah with the Hebrew people, and that the will and teaching of Jehovah is communicated to the people through chosen men peculiarly fitted to comprehend (*a*) the will of Jehovah; (*b*) the current political and religious situation; (*c*) the way of progress out of that situation?

Read rapidly now II Kings, chaps. 1–5, the story of the translation of Elijah, the succession of Elisha, and the series of miracle-stories of Elisha. Note in chap. 3 especially that the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom form an alliance, and go to war against their common enemy, the king of Moab, and that in the wars which follow, Elisha is a prominent adviser. Also note in chap. 4 that Elisha seems to have a wide reputation, is appealed to by those in need, is a welcome guest in the home of the rich Shunamite, has his own servant, is the center of a circle of prophets, and (chap. 5) has become known even in Syria. Chaps. 6 7, 8, 9, and 10, which we shall not be able to read at this time, are occupied with further stories of Elisha, and the Syrian wars in which Elisha becomes an arbitrator between Syria and Israel, and is prominent in the councils of all concerned. Passing to chaps. 9 and 10, we find him selecting Jehu as successor to the house of Ahab, and anointing him king preparatory to a great rebellion (vss. 1–16). In the thought of the writer this rebellion is the fulfilment of the curse upon the house of Ahab made in the time of Ahab, the story becoming still more vivid by the addition of the account of the death of Jezebel (vss. 30–37), and the complete extinction of the descendants of Ahab (10:1–11). Do we not see by these stories that the accounts are an interpretation of history rather than a mere record

of acts? And so we should continue to find were we able to read the entire history contained in the Books of Kings.

Fifteenth and sixteenth days. §100. If you would like to see just the succession of kings in this period consult the chart. In our reading we will not further consider the Books of Kings as books, but will use the history contained in them as background for the study of another and very different class of literature, the books of sermons or orations of the prophets whose name, as we have seen, signifies "speaker for God." Let us pass to 14:23–29, and note that in the reign of this second Jeroboam of Israel, a reign of forty-one years, although Jeroboam is represented by the prophet as following in the steps of the first Jeroboam, the record remains (vs. 25) that he restored Israel to very great importance in territory through his successful wars, especially with Syria (vs. 28). We should notice, also, in chap. 15 that this is a time when peace reigns in Judah, the length of the reign of Azariah, a contemporary of king Jeroboam, being fifty-two years.

AMOS

Seventeenth day. §101. Let us now turn to the Book of Amos, and note in 1:1 that Amos lived in the days of Jeroboam and of Ahaziah or Uzziah, that his home was in Tekoa of the southern kingdom (locate this place on the map).

Let us see if we can discover from this Book of Amos something of the political, social, and religious condition of Israel in this reign. 3:9, 10, 12*b* suggest wealth and luxury; 5:10, 11 suggest that the wealthy obtained their riches by oppression of the poor, and by heavy taxes. Vss. 21–24 show elaborate religious assemblies; 6:1–5 contains a picture of idleness and dissipation, and 8:4–8, dishonesty in all the ordinary dealings of life. We have, then, from this contemporary preacher, a picture of a land, great in extent, at peace with its neighbors, prosperous commercially, enthusiastic in the *formal* observance of religion, but corrupt in every relation of life.

Eighteenth day. §102. Feeling now the close relation of this preacher to his times, let us read portions of his book, remembering that they are but scattered fragments of speeches, perhaps written down by himself, and perhaps by his friends or followers at a later time. To know just the circumstances of their writing is not so important as to understand the relation which they bore to the times in which Amos lived and the influence which they may have had on public opinion of that or a later time. Read 1:1 and note that the prophecies are addressed to Samaria, that is, the capital of northern Israel; that vss. 4, 5 would suggest that they were spoken at Bethel, one of the great sanctuaries, indeed, the royal sanctuary of northern Israel. See also 7:10, remembering that Amos, according to his own statement, was a herdsman. Shall we imagine him taking a journey from his home in Tekoa (perhaps the speeches represent a number of different journeys) to Bethel, the northern sanctuary? Read 7:10–14, the story of an occasion in which Amos most certainly was at Bethel, and note that whatever he has been saying is so offensive to the priest of Bethel that he witnesses against Amos to the king, and Amos is obliged to leave the city, but not without pronouncing upon his informer a sorry doom.

Nineteenth day. §103. Read now 1:3—2:5, and note the skill of the prophet in holding an audience until he has reached the point at which he wishes to deliver his special message. Shall we imagine him, perhaps, upon the street corner or an elevated place drawing about him by his eloquence gradually a larger and larger crowd? Let us take up the substance of his speech: note in vs. 2 his announcement that what he says is a message from Jehovah. In vss. 3–5, 6–8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13–15, and 2:1–3, does he not take up one by one the past enemies of Israel, and in a way which would delight the heart of the Israelites, show how Jehovah has destined them all to destruction, one by one, each because of conduct which was displeasing to him? Can anything be more acceptable than these denunciations? In 2:4, 5 he comes nearer home, but Judah, having been long at war with northern Israel, would naturally receive censure and the people are pleased that he should draw down upon Judah the vengeance of Jehovah. But note in vss. 6–16 the direful message to Israel itself, "because of her greed and oppression, because of her perversion of the prophets (vs. 12), swift vengeance shall come." Let us consider for a moment the character of this vengeance (consult map), and note the geographical situation of Palestine as compared with Egypt and Assyria, the two great nations of antiquity, nations constantly at war with each other. Let us raise the question as to what attitude these nations would naturally take toward Palestine, remembering that it occupies the coast line between Egypt and Assyria, that through it is the shortest and most possible passage, the great caravan route, in fact, from Assyria to Egypt, and that through it have already passed for generations the merchants and the military supplies going from one country to the other; that through it also have marched the troops of these great nations. Can we not appreciate the fact that the right of way through Palestine was most important to both these countries? In the time of Amos we may consider that Assyria was in the ascendency, that at least ten times in the century between 876 and 767 the Assyrian hosts had threatened the invasion of Palestine. It is this situation which for centuries gave direction to the history of Israel, and to the work of the prophets a definiteness which one can never understand or appreciate without a conception of the historical situation. Shall we understand, therefore, that in vss. 13–16 Amos sees in his mind's eye the coming of a great army, possibly the Assyrian, and the devastation of Israel?

Twentieth day. §104. Read 3:9—4:3, the thrilling presentation of the doom of Samaria. Try to rewrite this fragment of a speech in your own words so that you may fully understand its force. The language of the prophets is highly figurative and poetic, many times even taking the form of poetry. To reduce it to plain prose is difficult, but it is a most helpful exercise. See paragraph under "Directions for Study," p. 62.

Twenty-first day. §105. Note how the prophet in 4:4–13 interprets past history, the disasters which have come upon Israel, the drought, failure of crops, blasting, mildew, the palmer worm, pestilence, war, all these have been the messengers of Jehovah to his people in the hope that they may turn to him in repentance. Note in vss. 4, 5, that there has been no failure of the people in the formal expression of

gratitude to Jehovah, but that their multitudinous sacrifices are empty and unacceptable because of their sinful lives (5:21–24). Note that the judgment for all this in the mind of the prophet is captivity (5:27—6:14). Further visions of destruction are found in 7:1—9:8, whether delivered in this place of feasting and sacrifice at Bethel or later we cannot say. But turning to 9:8–14 let us note that the message of the book is not one wholly of despair, for at a future day when Jehovah shall have executed his judgment Israel will again be restored and "will no more be plucked up out of their land." Perhaps not Amos, but one of softer mood, affixed this passage. We are glad, at least, that it is there to temper the stern message which precedes it.

Twenty-second day. §106. Shall we sum up, now, the teaching of Amos, as we recall the situation? Is it the reiteration of the message of the writers which we have already learned, i. e., that Jehovah is moving in human history? Does Amos extend this teaching so that, to him, *all* nations are in the hand of Jehovah? Remembering the great prosperity of the times and the extravagant and imposing religious ceremonial, we find in Amos the first strong presentation of the principle that conduct is the vital thing, that religious ceremonial, apart from conduct, is of no value. We also find him saying with tremendous vigor and in thundering tones that *any* nation which does not conform to the standards of Jehovah shall perish by Jehovah's will.

HOSEA

Twenty-third day. §107. We turn now to another prophet of a little later period than the one which we have just been studying, the prophet Hosea. Read II Kings 15:8–16, and note that in Samaria there are rapid changes going on in the government. After the death of Jeroboam, his son reigns but six months, his successor, a conspirator, but one month, and that, in the following reign of Menahem (vss. 17–22), Assyria advances against Samaria, receives tribute, and Israel becomes a dependency of Assyria. During this period lived the prophet Hosea. His book is of interest for the reason that it represents a conception of God growing primarily out of his own personal life experience, an experience that seems to him to picture something of the relation of Israel and Jehovah, and which leads him to interpret history from a point of view which had not been used by his predecessors. We cannot do better than to give here an analysis of the book.

ANALYSIS OF HOSEA

1. The harlotry of Gomer, the prophet's wife, 1:2–9.
2. The purchase of Gomer as a slave, and her retention many days, 3:1–5.
3. Israel's harlotry and her punishment therefor, 2:2–5, 8–12, 13, 17.
4. Later voices describing Israel's return to Jehovah, 2:6, 7, 14, 15, 18–23; 1:10—2:1.
5. Jehovah's contention with Israel on account of sins encouraged by the priests, 4:1–19.
6. The guilt of priests and princes, 5:1–14.
7. Fitful repentance insufficient to remove Israel's guilt, 5:15—7:7.
8. The confusion of the nation, 7:8—8:3.
9. Israel's kings and idols displeasing and destructive, 8:4–14.
10. Israel's exile—a breaking-up of social and religious habits, 9:1–9.

We will spend the next seven days in reading the book according to this analysis. If you have not time to read all of it, select by means of the analysis the portions which most interest you, but do not omit the eleventh chapter, for in that is contained the great message of Hosea.

Thirty-first day. §108. Shall we sum up the teaching of the book and the contribution of Hosea to the religious thought of Israel? Was it not in substance, "As I look back upon my own life history, which, perhaps, God himself gave me in order that I might see in it his message to his people, do I not see how, even as I loved my unfaithful wife, even as I bought her back from slavery and restored her to my home, never wavering in my love for her through all the years of her desertion, Jehovah has been teaching me that far beyond my faithfulness to my wife is his faithfulness to Israel, that through all the years of her apostasy, her worship of idols, her rejection of his teachings, he has not failed in his love for her? Is she not his child? Has he not chosen her, trained her, and directed her history? Is it possible for him, the Father of Israel, utterly to cast her off? Punishment is necessary but abandonment is impossible."

In this book, Hosea, the Old Testament prophet, approaches more nearly to the conception of God as a father, a view perfectly presented only by Jesus Christ, than any other Old Testament prophet, but not yet do we find that he is regarded as father to any but Israel.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

READ CAREFULLY.—Answer questions, as far as possible, from memory. Then take your Bible and review with the questions in mind, revising your answers as you read. Should you wish to work for a certificate, send for the duplicate blanks and return them to the office of the Institute, Hyde Park, Chicago, Ill. Certificates will be awarded all who answer fifteen questions. An Honor sign will be placed upon the certificates of all who answer twenty questions.

1. What do the Books of Kings purport on the surface to be? .....

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2. How would you alter the title "Records of the Kings," in order more adequately to describe the books? .....

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3. What arguments can you give to prove that the writers of the Books of the Kings were prophets?

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4. What causes led to the division of Solomon's kingdom at his death? .....

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5. What was the crowning achievement of Solomon's reign? .....

6. How do you suppose that the kings really regarded the prophets? .....

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7. To what do the miracle-stories of Elijah and Elisha bear testimony? .....

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8. What was Elijah's great cause? .....

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9. In what series of wars was Israel engaged during the lifetime of Elisha? .....

10. What are the political conditions of northern Israel in the reign of Jeroboam II? .....

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11. How did these conditions affect religious ceremonial belief and conduct? .....

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12. What great prophet appeared at this time? .....

13. Where is it probable that some of his messages were delivered? .....

14. What imminent disaster gives color to his preaching? .....

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15. Give his message in a few words. .....

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16. Give several characteristics of Amos and of his style as a speaker. .....

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17. How was his message received? .....

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18. Upon what experience did Hosea base his message? .....

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19. Give the message in condensed form. .....

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20. Do you think that Amos and Hosea teach higher truths about God than their predecessors? Suggest some comparisons. .....

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STUDY V

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

THE PROPHETS OF THE ASSYRIAN INVASIONS

§109. The Assyrians threaten Judah.
II Kings 15:1–38.
§110. Much worship, but little religion.
Isa. 1:1–23.
§111. Isaiah's inaugural vision.
Isa. 6:1–13.
§112. Punishment and desolation in sight.
Isa. 2:6—4:1.
§113. A remnant shall survive.
Isa. 4:2–6.
§114. An allegory.
Isa., chap. 5.
§115. The crafty Ahaz.
II Kings, chaps. 16, 17.
§116. Isaiah fights the triple alliance.
Isa. 7:1–25.
§117. Jehovah is Israel's only safety.
Isa. 8:1–15.
§118. The anger of Jehovah and his punishment in the past recalled.
Isa. 9:8—10:4.
§119. The Assyrian has come but there is a glorious future for Israel.
Isa. 8:16—9:5.
§120. Judah, like Samaria, shall fall because of false leaders.
Isa., chap. 28.
§121. Jerusalem is inviolate.
Isa., chap. 20.
§122. The pious Hezekiah.
Isa., chap. 38.
§123. The foolish Hezekiah.
Isa., chap. 39.
§124. Babylon shall fall.
Isa., chap. 21.
§125. Rely only upon Jehovah.
Isa., chaps. 29, 30.
§126. After the storm will come a calm.
Isa., chaps. 31, 32.
§127. Assyria an instrument in Jehovah's hands.
Isa. 10:5–34; chaps. 11, 12.
§128. Assyria shall be destroyed.
II Kings 18:13–18; Isa. 14:24–27; 17:12–14.
§129. After the darkness, light and glory.
Isa., chap. 33.
§130. Treating with the enemy.
Isa., chap. 36.
§131. The great deliverance.
Isa., chap. 37.
§132. Punishment is coming to northern and southern Israel.
Micah 1:1–16.
§133. The sins of Israel for which she will be punished.
Micah, chaps. 2, 3.
§134. Righteousness will bring peace.
Micah, chaps. 4, 5.
§135. The whole duty of man and the philosophy of history.
Micah 6:6–8; 7:18–20
§136. Historical review.
II Kings, chaps. 15–20.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY

ISAIAH, CHAPS. 1–39, AND MICAH

ISAIAH

First day. §109. Read once more II Kings 15:1–38, and note the reigns of Uzziah (or Azariah) and his son Jotham (vss. 1–7; 32–38) in Judah. Note carefully the characters of these kings and picture to yourself conditions in Judah during their reigns. Now read vss. 8–31, recording a turbulent period in the history of northern Israel, centering in Samaria. Recall that in this period tribute is paid to Assyria in the reign of Menehan. Study carefully the chart, noticing that Isaiah is indicated as living in Judea from about 737–686 B. C., and that his work commences about the time of the invasion of northern Israel by the great Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria. It is, as we shall see, the constant possibility of further invasions from Assyria, and the uncertainty of the kings of Judah as to the best policy to pursue, which gave point to all the wonderful prophecies of Isaiah. Let us then get the historical situation clearly in mind.

Second day. §110. In reading the prophecies of Isaiah we must bear in mind that they are not arranged in his book in chronological order, but their approximate dates must be ascertained as nearly as possible from the contents of the separate messages. In order, however, to get the summary of the religious situation at which Isaiah aimed his teaching let us read 1:1–23, a bitter arraignment of the people of Judah for their failure to recognize in the disasters, which have already fallen, the hand of Jehovah (vss. 2–9). Note that the tendency of the people was apparently to conciliate Jehovah by means of multitudinous offerings and great religious manifestations (vss. 10–14), the rejection of all of these by Jehovah because of the failure of the people to make their daily lives an expression of the ethical requirements of Jehovah (vs. 15), and the demand of Jehovah that by the ordinary good works of justice and mercy they should seek his favor (vss. 16–20). Vs. 21 suggests that the wickedness of the people extends to those in the highest places. While this message of Isaiah probably came from the later years of his work it may well stand as a picture of the general situation to which he appealed.

Third day. §111. Read Isa. 6:1–13, noting (1) the date and circumstances of Isaiah's inaugural vision; (2) what the prophet saw and heard in the temple; (3) the effect of the vision upon the building as he viewed it and upon the prophet himself (vss. 4, 5); (4) the purification of the prophet and his

offer to go and preach (vss. 6–8); (5) the terrible commission given him (vss. 9, 10); (6) how long this condition of things was to continue (vss. 11–13). Must we not infer that this story of his call was told by Isaiah himself, in all probability written by him, possibly after he had already been preaching many years, and that it was this afterthought as he looked back upon his experience which is expressed in vss. 11–13? Having felt the hopelessness of turning the people to Jehovah through his message he comes to feel that from the beginning the people were incapable of receiving his message, but note in vs. 13 the appearance of one of the great themes of Isaiah's preaching, the survival of a holy remnant through whom Jehovah will fulfil all his promises to the nation.

Fourth day. §112. Read Isa. 2:6–22. Consider vss. 2–4, the Jehovah religion represented "by the mountain of Jehovah's house." The exaltation of this religion, the anxiety of peoples even outside of Israel to come under its sway, and the wonderful picture of peace, even the implements of warfare having been destroyed. Read vss. 5–11 and note the contrasting humiliation which shall be brought upon the people and upon their idols, upon nature and inanimate objects (vss. 12–21), upon misguided rulers (2:22—3:15); upon the women whose pride and vanity have brought ruin upon the nation (3:16—4:1). Note the wonderful detail of Isaiah's descriptions. Do you also appreciate the contrasts which he introduces—the picture of peace followed immediately by one of terror? Is there great oratorical art here?

Fifth day. §113. Bearing in mind the picture of desolation with which we closed our work yesterday, a present full of misery, ill-gotten luxury, idolatry, and sin, we recall that the prophet saw an immediate future in which Israel should be punished most severely by the invasion of Assyria, a danger apparent not only to Isaiah but to all the people. But note that again Isaiah (4:2–6) perceives a more distant future following the invasion in which there shall be a faithful remnant, prosperous and holy, and a city inviolable. This picture corresponds with and completes the picture of 2:2–4 with which the sermon began.

Sixth day. §114. Consider once more the relationship of Jehovah to the people of Israel. Have we not seen that all the writers of the biblical books believe that Israel was chosen by Jehovah for a special, peculiar relationship to him; a relationship which shall be a benefit to all the world? Consider now chap. 5, a beautiful allegory through which the prophet first gains the attention of the people, and then presses home his lesson of righteousness (vss. 1–7). Israel is a vineyard planted by Jehovah, nursed and cared for in the expectation that good fruits will be the result, but what are the fruits? Vss. 8–10, monopoly; vss. 11–17, drunkenness and debauchery; vss. 18, 19, skepticism; vs. 20, moral blindness; vs. 21, self-conceit; vss. 22, 23, bribery and corruption. What will Jehovah do to his people because of these bad fruits? "He will lift up an ensign to the nations from afar" (vss. 26–30). What does this mean? Is it not the Assyrian invasion? Note the description "of the rapid advance," "battle array," "unerring aim," "iron grasp," "irresistible shock," "impenetrable darkness."

Seventh day. §115. Read II Kings 16:1–20, and note the character of the reign of Ahaz in which occurred the capture of Damascus by the Assyrian king (vs. 9), and the building of the great altar (vss. 11–16). Read also II Kings 17:1–23, and note that in northern Israel Samaria was captured by the Assyrian king, 722 B. C. and that the immediate cause of the anger of the Assyrian king seems to have been the rebellion of the king of Israel against him, and the conspiracy of this king with the king of Egypt. Note also the length of the siege of Samaria, three years. Does this give us some idea of the strength of the city, and the tenacity of the people in their determination to save themselves from being devoured by the great nations about them? Was there not something more in this than mere desire for separate political life? Study carefully the comment of the writer of the Books of Kings upon this situation (vss. 7–23). It is this God-given view of history which produced the prophets and their work

Eighth day. §116. Let us return now to the period immediately before the fall of Samaria, in which Isaiah began his work—a period in which Syria and Israel unite to compel Judah to form a triple alliance against the Assyrians. Read Isa. 7:1, 2. Note (vss. 3–9) that Isaiah objects to this alliance, perhaps because he had no faith in its effectiveness politically, and certainly because he felt that it was not the will of Jehovah. Note that he encourages Ahaz by predicting the very early fall of northern Israel and Syria. Does Ahaz accept his encouragement? Apparently not, for in a second interview (vss. 10–17), this time seemingly in the presence of the court, the prophet offers a sign that within five years at most the king of Assyria will devastate the land of Syria. Consult the chart and note that Syria was conquered in 732 B. C. Read still further the four descriptions of desolation and waste given in vss. 18–25.

Ninth day. §117. Remembering that the prophet has predicted the waste of Syria within a few years, read Isa. 8:1–15, noting in vss. 1–4 that the period before the coming of Assyria is now reduced to perhaps two years. In vss. 5–10 study the assurance that God will be with the people, although Assyria is surely coming. The demand of the people and the wish of the king, to unite with Assyria is condemned by the prophet and offset by his urgent appeal to call upon Jehovah alone for safety.

Tenth day. §118. Read also Isa. 9:8—10:4, a series of exhortations to recall the past with its punishments from Jehovah, the paragraphs ending each time with the terrible refrain, "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

Eleventh day. §119. At last the Assyrian army is come and to the fall of Damascus is to be added the fall of Samaria. Note the prophet's prayer (8:16–18), that his message may be preserved and accomplish its purpose; his warning (vss. 19, 20) not to resort to necromancy but to trust in God; his description of the darkness and desolation which shall follow the destruction of Samaria (vss. 21, 22). But note how in the midst of this impending desolation the prophet (9:1) predicts the glorification of Israel, the coming of light (vs. 2), joy out of sorrow (vs. 3), freedom out of captivity (vs. 4), peace out of war (vs. 5), a ruler whose wisdom, whose heroism, and whose character shall far transcend those of the terrible Tiglath-pileser whose coming is imminent.

Twelfth day. §120. Read Isa., chap. 28, the doom of Samaria. Note vss. 1–6, the inevitable

judgment; vss. 7–13, "let Judah also tremble for she has rejected the word of the prophets of Jehovah, and is following those of the false prophets who predict only things which are pleasant." Note Isaiah's denunciation of the politicians of his day (vss. 14–29).

Thirteenth day. §121. Understanding that ten or eleven years have passed and that Samaria has long since become ruins (722 B. C.) read Isa., chap. 20. Note the symbolical action described in vs. 2, and, remembering that many of the inhabitants of Judah wish to place their reliance on Egypt, read vss. 3, 4, describing the ruin of Egypt, and vss. 5, 6, the dismay of the people at its destruction. Bear in mind that Isaiah at no time believed that Jehovah would permit a foreign army to take the city of Jerusalem. That city he considered the abode of Jehovah, and sacred from invasion. It is clear, however, that Judah was to be dismembered, as it were, and that from the faithful remnant which remained a greater and more glorious nation was to be developed.

Fourteenth day. §122. Read now the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery (Isa., chap. 38), recalling (see II Kings 18:10) that it was in the sixth year of this king that Samaria had been taken. Note vss. 1–3, his prayer for life; vss. 4–8, the promise of recovery and the sign; vss. 9–20, the psalm in which the whole story is recited; vs. 21, the recovery. Do we learn through this story something of the character of the good Hezekiah?

Fifteenth day. §123. Read Isa., chap. 39, the interesting story of Merodach-baladan and his presents. Consider the purpose of the embassy (vs. 1), the foolishness of Hezekiah (vs. 2), Isaiah's rebuke of Hezekiah (vss. 3–7), in which great emphasis is laid upon the part that Babylon is to play, and (vs. 8) the acceptance of the rebuke by Hezekiah. Do we here see Isaiah the prophet in this crisis rising supreme over ruler and people and swaying the nation? This was the climax of the power of the prophet as a political factor in the Hebrew nation.

Sixteenth day. §124. Remembering now that in Jerusalem there is a political party antagonistic to Assyria, seeking terms with Assyria's great rival, Babylon, note that Judah is greatly interested in the result of the coming conflict between Assyria and Babylon. For if Babylon is the victor the yoke of Assyria will be removed, while if Assyria conquers, Judah will certainly be punished for her overture to Babylon made through Hezekiah. Remembering that the prophet is also watching this outcome, read Isa., chap. 21, the announcement of the coming fall of Babylon, which, as a matter of fact, takes place in 711 B. C. when the city falls into the hands of Assyria. Let us note also as matters of history that about this time, 711 B. C., Ashdod, a city in southwestern Palestine, was also captured, and that Sennacherib ascends the throne of Assyria and enters upon a series of western campaigns in which he must first put down rebellions, such as the one in Palestine, in favor of an alliance with the Egyptians.

Seventeenth day. §125. What position shall Isaiah take as between the party which favors alliance with Assyria and the party which favors alliance with Egypt? He has come to believe that Assyria is the nation which, in God's hands, will punish Israel for her sins. Rebellion against Assyria is, therefore, rebellion against God. He knows that Sennacherib will shortly come to Palestine. In view of this situation read Isa. 29:1–5. "Within one year an army shall come (vss. 6–8), but that army shall be scattered (vss. 9–16). Men of Jerusalem, you are blind. Your priests err. You are making a mistake. You are perverse (vss. 17–24). But the time is coming in the not far distant future when our nation will be transformed, when there will be no more shame of any kind." Read also in the same connection 30:1–7, the failure of the embassy that has been sent to Egypt for assistance; vss. 8–17, the sure destruction which is certain to come upon Jerusalem; vss. 18–26, the glorious time in the future; vss. 27–29, the majestic approach of Jehovah; vss. 30–33, the manifestation of Jehovah's presence and the end.

Eighteenth day. §126. Read chaps. 31 and 32, and classify the material under the following topics: (*a*) the folly of resting upon Egypt; (*b*) the destruction which is certain to come; (*c*) the happy times that will follow the destruction; (*d*) the righteousness and peace which shall characterize those times; (*e*) the storm which must precede these times; (*f*) the happy days which will follow the storm.

Nineteenth day. §127. The invasion of Sennacherib took place in 701 B. C. (see chart), the city of Jerusalem is panic-stricken imagining Sennacherib in northern Palestine on the march toward Jerusalem. Read Isa. 10:5–11, the interpretation of Isaiah; vss. 12–15, she is only an instrument in the hands of Jehovah; vss. 16–19, her destruction is certain; vss. 20–23, a remnant shall survive; vss. 24–27, why should Zion fear? vss. 28–34, although rapidly approaching Jerusalem at the last moment Assyria shall perish in an instant. Read in this connection chaps. 11 and 12 in which the prophet contrasts with the fallen tree of Assyria, the sprout from which the oak of David shall spring forth; the picture of righteousness and universal peace ending in a great song of the joyous future when the promises shall be realized.

Twentieth day. §128. Recall that Sennacherib is already in Palestine with a large army close to the city of Jerusalem. The whole territory surrounding Jerusalem is overrun, forty-six cities are captured, two thousand inhabitants are carried away, Hezekiah is yielding. Read II Kings 18:13–18, recording his tribute. Turn now to Isa. 14:24–27, the prediction of Assyria's destruction, and 17:12–14, in which this destruction is represented as sudden and terrible.

Twenty-first day. §129. Bearing in mind that Hezekiah has made an agreement with Sennacherib, note that suddenly the situation turns. Sennacherib, suspicious of Hezekiah, breaks the covenant and demands an unconditional surrender of Jerusalem. II Kings 18:17, the city is in an uproar, a deputation is sent to the king at Lachish but without avail. Isaiah in the midst of this darkness preaches the sermon of chap. 33: "Assyria shall perish and Judah in the near future shall prosper; the future will bring glory and delight."

Twenty-second day. §130. The situation becomes more and more critical. Read the account contained in Isa., chap. 36. The deputation of Hezekiah (vss. 1–3), the insulting reply (vss. 4–10), the request and refusal (vss. 11, 12), the final petition and reply (vss. 13–22).

Twenty-third day. §131. Continue with chap. 37, noting (vs. 1) the grief of king Hezekiah; vss.

2–5, his appeal to Isaiah for comfort; vss. 6, 7, Isaiah's inspiring answer, "the Assyrian army shall return to his own land." Consider now the events described in vss. 8, 9, and the nearer approach of the army of Sennacharib, vss. 10–13. Hezekiah in his despair appeals to Jehovah directly, the defiant letter of the king of Syria in his hands, but the answer to his prayer comes through Isaiah (vss. 21–35). Can we appreciate the tremendous faith and courage of Isaiah who continues, the more the war-cloud darkens around him, the more fervently and confidently to repeat his message: "Assyria shall be turned back, the city of Jehovah shall be saved"? Make a mental review once more of the peculiarities of the situation, the magnitude of the crisis. Was there any human probability of release from this situation? Read Isa. 37:36, 37, which records the fulfilment of Isaiah's predictions. The Assyrian army is laid low, and Jerusalem is given another opportunity to obey the commands of Jehovah.

MICAH

Twenty-fourth day. §132. Before summing up the work of Isaiah let us continue our study with an examination of the sermons of a contemporary prophet, Micah. The teaching of Isaiah and Micah, coming from the same period, have much in common. Both prophets dealt with the same scenes and the same historical circumstances, Micah, however, viewing the situation from the point of view of a countryman, Isaiah from the central point of the court and capital. Read Mic. 1:1–16, noting the date of the prophecy, the residence of the prophet, and the fact that he does not discriminate between Samaria and Jerusalem so clearly as Isaiah. Not being a resident of Jerusalem, he does not feel so keenly the inviolability of the city, but predicts for Jerusalem, as for Samaria, devastation as a result of the sinful character of its inhabitants.

Twenty-fifth day. §133. Read chaps. 2, 3, and make for yourself a list of the sins which are there decried by the prophet. Compare this list with the résumé contained in Isa., chap. 1.

Twenty-sixth day. §134. Read 4:1–5 and compare with Isa. 5:1–4. There are those who see in Isaiah's chapter a quotation from Micah, and others who regard this as a quotation by both prophets from some older writer. Study the cry of Micah as he faces the danger from an incoming army (4:6—5:1), but see in him also confidence in the name of Jehovah, and in the coming of a ruler who shall far transcend in power and majesty the invader. Note, however, that in all the prophecies of this time the peace and prosperity which is to come is conditioned absolutely upon a return to righteousness on the part of the people.

Twenty-seventh day. §135. Read Mic., chap. 6, noting especially vss. 6–8, perhaps the highest ethical conception of Jehovah and his requirements to be found in the Old Testament, and also 7:18–20, the epitome of the Hebrew philosophy of history.

Twenty-eighth day. §136. Review now by chart and map and with the references in II Kings, chaps. 15–20, the history of this period. Make an outline of the history of Israel and Judah with their relations to Assyria and Egypt.

Twenty-ninth day. Glancing through the outline recall the two main periods of Isaiah's prophetic work connected with (1) the proposal for a triple alliance against which Ahaz wished to set an alliance with Assyria, recalling that at that time Isaiah worked against *any* foreign alliance, and (2) the later difficulties from which, after the fall of Samaria, Judah desired relief through an alliance with either Assyria or Egypt, recalling that at this time Isaiah advocated allegiance to Assyria as against Egypt, believing that in Assyria Jehovah had adopted an instrument of punishment from which it was useless to rebel. Recall how, as this punishment approached, Isaiah became more and more confident that a remnant of the people would be saved, and how, naturally, he believed that that remnant would be found among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the faithful ones in Jehovah's own city. Recall also that Micah, living in this same period, sees the Assyrian army also as an instrument in Jehovah's hands, and sees like Isaiah the salvation of the faithful remnant.

Thirtieth day. Can we sum up now certain teachings new and old which have appeared in the study of these books? (1) Jehovah controls the history of nations. (2) Jehovah has chosen his people Israel for a purpose which cannot perish; a remnant of the nation will always remain faithful to him and that remnant will be preserved. (3) Jerusalem is the sacred city of Jehovah; as such Isaiah believes that it can never be entered by a hostile army. Micah, living in the same period but away from Jerusalem, does not agree with Isaiah. (4) Both Isaiah and Micah have absolute confidence in the message which they believe Jehovah has planted within them, and are able under the most adverse circumstances to present to the people assurances of hope and well-being in the future.

Can we fail to believe that in these men we see a special divine selection of such men as were able to go beyond any of their contemporaries or predecessors in the conception of Jehovah, his power, and the character of the righteousness which he demanded from them? Is there an advance upon the message of Amos which was almost solely destruction? Do Isaiah and Micah go farther and say, "Yes, destruction to a certain extent, but a glorious redemption of the faithful, a restored nation, a righteous king, a glorious city"?

These are teachings for the Hebrew people of the times of Isaiah, but mark how much of them we can appropriate for our own day. Surely the first, and surely the high conception of Jehovah and his requirements in righteous conduct, such as sincerity, faithfulness, temperance, justice. "What doth thy God require of thee? To do justice, love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

REVIEW QUESTIONS

READ CAREFULLY.—Answer questions, as far as possible, from memory. Then take your Bible and review with the questions in mind, revising your answers as you read. Should you wish to work for a certificate, send for the duplicate blanks and return them to the office of the Institute, Hyde Park, Chicago, Ill. Certificates will be awarded all who answer fifteen questions. An Honor sign will be placed upon the certificates of all who answer twenty questions.

1. What are the approximate dates of the work of Isaiah? .....

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2. What were the general characteristics of the religion of his times and the defects against which he preached? .....

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3. Describe the call of Isaiah. .....

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4. Name one of the most striking characteristics of the arrangement of Isaiah's sermons. .....

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5. What was Isaiah's peculiar belief concerning the city of Jerusalem? .....

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6. What nations were struggling in his day for the control of Palestine? .....

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7. What was the situation against which Isaiah's sermons in the reign of Ahaz were directed? .....

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8. What event in northern Israel changed the tenor of Isaiah's counsel? .....

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9. Describe the character of King Hezekiah. .....

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10. How did he regard the councils of Isaiah? .....

11. What nation was at this time at war with Assyria? .....

12. Name some of the political parties in Jerusalem at this time? .....

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13. In what respects do you consider Isaiah a great statesman? .....

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14. What great Assyrian king laid siege to Jerusalem? .....

15. What attitude does Isaiah take in this crisis? .....

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16. How are his predictions vindicated in the events? .....

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17. What prophet was contemporary with Isaiah? .....

18. Name some of the differences between the teaching of Micah and Isaiah. .....

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19. Quote a verse from Micah which gives the highest conception of the religious attitude of man. .....

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20. What theory is advanced by the prophets of this period by means of which Jehovah may yet save the nation and redeem his promise? .....

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STUDY VI

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

PROPHECIES CONNECTED WITH THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

§137. Alternation of good and evil kings in Jerusalem. II Kings 21:1—22:1.
§§138, 139. Nahum's denunciation of Nineveh. The Book of Nahum.
§§140, 141, 142. Zephaniah's interpretation of the Assyrian invasion. The Book of Zephaniah.
§143. The finding of the book. II Kings 22:3–20.
§144. The terror of the king, and the great reform. II Kings 23:1–25.
§145. A reiteration of old commands. Deut., chap. 5; 6:1–3.
§146. Love of Jehovah, the basis of obedience. Deut. 6:4–9.
§147. Varied laws. Deut. (selected passages).
§148. The central sanctuary, and the Levitical priest. Deut., chap. 18.
§149. Summary of the Book of Deuteronomy.
§§150, 151. The question of Habakkuk. The Book of Habakkuk.
§152. Sermons concerning the Scythian invasion. Jer. 2:14–19, 29–37; 3:21—4:2.
§153. Jeremiah and the reformation. Jer. 11:1–8, 9–23; 12:1–6.
§154. The death of Josiah, and return of idolatry. II Kings 23:29—24:6.
§155. Pictures of wickedness and punishment. Jer. 7:8–20; 8:4—9:9; 10:17–22.
§156. The wine-cup of fury. Jer., chap. 25.
§157. The invasion of Nebuchadnezzar. II Kings 24:8–17, 18–20; Jer. 27:12–15, 16–22.
§158. Jeremiah and the false prophets. Jer., chap. 28.
§159. The siege of Jerusalem and Jeremiah's warnings. II Kings 25:1, 2; Jer. 25:1–7; 22:1–9.
§160. The remnant shall return. Jer. 23:1–4, 5–8.
§161. The arrest of the prophet. Jer. 37:3—38:28.
§§162, 163. The book of comfort. Jer., chaps. 30, 31.
§164. The purchase of the field. Jer., chaps. 32, 33.
§165. The fall of Jerusalem. Jer. 39:1–14; chap. 52; II Kings 25:1–22.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY

NAHUM, ZEPHANIAH, DEUTERONOMY, HABAKKUK, JEREMIAH

First day. §137. Though differing somewhat in character, the books which will be studied this month form a related group, since they are all associated with a certain critical period in the history of Judah. Consult the chart and note that late in the seventh century B. C., Babylonia or Chaldaea conquered Assyria and the Assyrian nation whose dominion had extended through Palestine and down into Egypt itself ceased to exist. It is natural to suppose that the downfall of their ancient enemy, Assyria, should make a profound impression upon Palestine, and that in Egypt there would be restlessness and rebellion as a result of this change of dynasty. At this time, however, still another element of disturbance appears on the scene. The Scythians, of whom we know very little except that they were a bold, blood-thirsty, and cruel people, coming from somewhere to the north of Palestine, swept through the plains of Mesopotamia, and threatened every province of the civilized and semi-civilized East. The wave of ruin spread along the sea-coast, even to the border of Egypt. We have no reason to think that Judah was seriously injured by the passing hordes, but reference to the map will remind us that the terrors of such a ruthless army must have possessed her inhabitants. Turning to II Kings 21:1–18, let us read the record of the events at the capital of Judah. Note that in Manasseh's reign, beginning when he was twelve years old, a reign of fifty-five years in length, all the reforms which had been carried out in the reign of Hezekiah, his father, were reversed. Every form of idolatry was introduced into Jerusalem, and in the very temple itself images were installed. Prophets unnamed by the writer protested and pronounced over Jerusalem the doom which had already overtaken Samaria. Vs. 16 leads us to think that for this service to their nation a persecution of the prophets was carried on by Manasseh. Note further in vss. 19–26 that Amon, the son of Manasseh, continued in his father's evil ways, and died after two years at the hands of a conspirator; and in 22:1, that at the early age of eight years, Josiah, his son, was proclaimed king. Doubtless as a result of his having in his early youth the training of a good mother and a strong priest, and perhaps also the friendship of the prophets of this period (vs. 2), "he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah."

NAHUM

Second day. §138. Recalling that Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was captured by the Babylonians, 606 B. C., let us read the book of Nahum, a short prophecy, hardly more than a tract, written apparently at the critical moment when Nineveh was just about to fall into the hands of the Babylonians. Note in

chap. 1 Nahum's splendid presentation of the strength and fierceness of Jehovah (vss. 1–6); his care for his own people (vs. 7); and his determination to avenge himself upon all her enemies (vs. 8). Jehovah has already gone forth against the Assyrians, and because of their attitude against Israel they shall be destroyed (vss. 9–14).

Third day. §139. Read chap. 2, and try to express its meaning in your own language, and in a very few sentences. Read chap. 3, and note the scathing scorn of the prophet as he sees in his mind's eye the distress of the enemy and remembers that other nations equally strong have perished, but note (vss. 18, 19) that Assyria's coming disaster appears to the prophet as a direct and awful punishment for her wickedness. There is scarcely a note other than this exaltation of righteous indignation and glory in revenge in the whole book. As we read this book can we fail to see how closely the work of the prophets was related to the stirring events of the times in which they lived? Can we fail to see how human thought about God has been developed through the experiences of men and nations, and their interpretation of history?

ZEPHANIAH

Fourth day. §140. Review the preliminary statement of the first day. We will now pass to the message of a prophet whose sermons seem to be directly connected with the invasions of the terror-inspiring Scythians. Note that this book is prefaced by a title announcing the author and giving his genealogy back to the fourth generation. We do not know certainly that Zephaniah was the descendant of King Hezekiah, but there is much to favor the supposition that the Hezekiah referred to in this verse is the king with whose work we are familiar. It is possible, therefore, that we have in Zephaniah a prophet actually related in blood to the ruling king, Josiah. It was surely not strange in these troubled times that men in high places should become interpreters of Jehovah, who was dealing death-blows to the enemies of Israel, men who at the same time saw in this avenging God the destroyer of even his own people, should they not heed the word of his prophets. For while Nineveh had fallen and seemed less dangerous, the Scythians were in the foreground and would provide a more terrible instrument in the hands of Jehovah than the Assyrians themselves. Read Zeph., chap. 1, and note that it is against the idolators in Judah that the prophet directs his warning (vss. 2–6). Vss. 7–13 picture a great sacrificial feast in which the nobles of Israel who had brought into Judah foreign customs and foreign ideas shall themselves be the sacrifice; vss. 14–18 declare that the day of Jehovah, a day of wrath, desolation, trouble, darkness, and despair, is close at hand, and neither silver nor gold can deliver from the wrath of Jehovah.

Fifth day. §141. Read chap. 2, the exhortation of the prophet to the people to turn to Jehovah in the hope that his anger may yet be averted (vss. 1–3). Study in vss. 4–10 the picture of the devastation of the sea-coast land, then full of populous cities, soon to be laid waste by the Scythian army. Note in vss. 8–11 that Zephaniah like Nahum regards the Scythian raids upon the surrounding nations as a terrible visitation of Jehovah because of the attitude which these nations have in times past assumed toward his people, and (vss. 12–15) includes in this vengeance Assyria and Egypt.

Sixth day. §142. Read chap. 3, an arraignment of Jerusalem, of the princes, judges, prophets, and priests whose iniquity has been exposed by Jehovah, and who will surely share in the fate of her nobles unless she accepts in a spirit of meekness and repentance the punishments which he sends, for in his hands (vs. 8) he holds the nations of the world, and may use them as he will. But note (vss. 9–13), that Zephaniah cannot conceive of Jehovah as purely a God of vengeance and wrath, but sees in all this cataclysm of nations a great purpose in the mind of Jehovah, namely, that all nations may recognize his righteousness, and may co-operate in bringing back to Jerusalem those who have been dispersed to the lands of her enemies, and in exalting Judah not only to her ancient glory, but to an ideal position among the nations (vss. 14–20). In that day the land shall be full of righteousness, for Jehovah himself shall dwell in his city of Jerusalem and there shall be no more shame but "a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth."

DEUTERONOMY

Seventh day. §143. Turning to II Kings, read the story contained in 22:3–13. Note especially the startling effect which the reading of the book found in the temple produced upon the king (vs. 11) and his conclusion that the disasters of Israel and Judah have resulted from their failure to obey the commands which this book presents (vs. 13). Read vss. 14–20, the acquiescence of the prophetess in this conclusion, the indication (vs. 17) that the book had to do with the worship of Jehovah, and the statement that because of Josiah's good conscience the punishments for failure to obey the commands of the book will not fall during his lifetime.

Eighth day. §144. Read II Kings 23:1–25. Make a careful study of the things which the king does in his effort to carry out the long-neglected commands of the book. It will help you if you make a list of these various acts in a reform extending not only throughout Jerusalem and its immediate environment, but apparently covering an extensive territory, and necessarily consuming considerable time.

Ninth day. §145. We have not time to study all the reasons why it has come to be understood by scholars that the book found in the time of Josiah was an ancient edition of all or a part of our book, Deuteronomy. We may, however, examine some of the indications of this fact, and better understand the terror with which its reading inspired the king, and the haste and expedition with which he carried out the reforms which its reading suggested. Turn to Deuteronomy and note that (vs. 1) the book purporting to be the final addresses of Moses before the people entered the Promised Land has to do in 1:1—4:40 with a review of a history of the people up to the point of their entrance to Palestine. Read chap. 5, and note that this section begins with a new version of the Ten Commandments. Compare this version with that of Exod., chap. 20, and note the differences. Read also 6:1–13, and note the rewards of obedience to these commands.

Tenth day. §146. Read Deut. 6:4–9. Is not this a most spiritual conception of the foundation of obedience to Jehovah in love? It is interesting to recall that this is one of the favorite sections which, written in Hebrew upon a strip of parchment, was worn by the religious Jews in Jesus' day upon the arm or forehead, or fastened on the doorpost. As we recall the giving of the Commandments as recorded in Exodus, do we find any suggestion of love as furnishing the basis of obedience? Read vss. 10–15 and note especially vss. 14 and 15, the injunction to worship Jehovah alone, on pain of death.

Eleventh day. §147. Read Deut. 10:12. Does not this sound very like the statement of Micah which we have already studied? Read 11:1, 8, 18, and note that the tone of this portion of the book is that of exhortation; that the writer is apparently trying to show reasons why the people should obey Jehovah, namely, because of their wonderful history which he has guided, of the possession of the land which he has given them, and their laws which he has ordained for the guidance of their lives. Let us pass now to chaps. 12–26, a series of laws on practically every exigency of life. Read 12:1–7, and note that the people are required by this law to destroy every trace of the worship of their foreign neighbors, images, high-places, sacred trees, and to bring their offerings to one chosen place. Note that the remainder of the chapter has to do with this same question of the place of sacrifice; that this requirement of a central place of worship would, if it were carried out in the days of Josiah, necessitate just the kind of reform which he instituted, the abolition of high-places throughout the land, even the great altar at Bethel, and the desecration of all places of worship save the temple at Jerusalem.

Twelfth day. §148. Read Deut. 17:14–20, the instructions concerning the king and his attitude toward the law. Does not this also suggest that King Josiah was trying to conform to the standards of the Book of Deuteronomy? Read also 18:1–5, and note the emphasis upon the tribe of Levi as priests. Consider that in this reformation the high priest in Jerusalem would have a very important part, and reflect that the centralization of worship at one place with a given tribe of priests would render that priestly tribe very important and powerful. Read also 18:15–22, the promise of the continuous presence of a line of prophets whose authority shall be tested by the results of their work. Putting these two sections of chap. 18 together, do we not suspect that in the arrangement of this book both prophets and priests were concerned?

Thirteenth day. §149. Need we go farther in the study of Deuteronomy than to glance through the remaining chapters and note that the book is chiefly taken up with laws; that with the laws of chaps. 27 and 28 are coupled blessing and cursing, blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience; that the laws are framed in a series of sermons? Shall we recall that the prophets were the sermonizers or teachers of Israel; that they were fighting to the death the idolatry which, at times, completely overshadowed the worship of Jehovah; that the priests of the Jerusalem temple would, in common with the prophets, bewail the condition of things, idolatry having been brought again and again into the very precincts of the temple itself? Can we see then in the Book of Deuteronomy an effort of priests and prophets to put before the people in the most forceful way not only the old laws of Moses but such an interpretation of them and of the common law, which had arisen since his day, that they could not fail to be impressed with it? Shall we register also as the temporal teaching of this book: "for Israel, one God, Jehovah; one sanctuary, the temple at Jerusalem; one priesthood, the tribe of Levi; and the spirit of the book, that recorded in Deut. 6:4–5, love, the basis of obedience"? For ourselves may we not recall that Jesus, speaking to the men of his own time, quotes vs. 5, and forever stamps it as the first great commandment?

HABAKKUK

Fourteenth day. §150. Before passing to the work of the greatest prophet of this period let us turn to one of the so-called minor prophets, Habakkuk. (The twelve prophets whom you will find in the index of your bible, beginning with Hosea and ending with Malachi, have been popularly designated minor prophets, this having no reference whatever to the strength of the prophecy, but to their brevity as compared with what are called the major prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.) This prophet lived perhaps twenty years later than the reform of Josiah. We shall easily see from a glance at his book that Judah was again in trouble; this time it was the Chaldaeans or Babylonians whom they feared. Read the dialogue in chaps. 1 and 2 between the prophet and God, which may be condensed as follows:

Prophet. 1:1–4. "Why, O Lord, when we cry, being in such wretchedness, dost thou not answer?"

God. 1:5–11. "Behold! I will do a thing—ye will not believe it; I will bring the Chaldaeans, strong and mighty, who abandon themselves to the worship of selfish force."

Prophet. 1:12–17. "I am sure we shall not die; but how can *you*, such a God, allow the Chaldaeans to triumph over us?" (No answer.)

Prophet. 2:1. "I will wait in meditation, on the watch-tower, for further answer."

God. 2:2–5. "An important matter; Babylon is proud and ambitious, but the righteous shall live if they remain faithful. The nations gathered in by the Chaldaean king will curse him because of (2:6–8) his covetousness, his rapacity; (2:9–11) his selfishness; (2:12–14) his passion for building, and consequent oppression; (2:15–17) his delight in conquest; (2:18, 19) his idolatry."

Prophet. 2:20. "Let all the world be silent in the presence of Jehovah."

Fifteenth day. §151. Read the prayer of Habakkuk (chap. 3) for the revival of God's work, and for fearlessness in the coming troublous times, and, in vss. 3–15, the vision which has been vouchsafed in answer, a vision of Jehovah's manifestation of himself and his judgment of the nations. Note in vss. 16, 17 the description of the prophet's terror in view of the approaching calamities, and, vss. 18, 19, the prophet's joy and exaltation because of his faith in Jehovah. Does not this prophet present to us the problem of many people of his times: Why is a wicked people allowed to triumph over a good people? Do we not have here an answer of universal religious importance? "Let all the world be silent in the presence of Jehovah," and wait the outcome before despairing.

JEREMIAH

Sixteenth day. §152. We now pass to the work of one of the greatest prophets among the Hebrews, one who in his life and work suggests more nearly than any other the suffering Messiah, the self-abandonment and sacrifice of Jesus himself. Read the story of Jeremiah's call, understanding from the chart that he entered upon his work about 630 B. C., and was contemporary with the prophets just studied. Note also that he begins his work before the great reformation, which occurred about 621 B. C. Can we perhaps surmise that the prophet had something to do with bringing about this reformation? Read Jer., chap. 1, the story of his call, noting his youth. For sermons like those of Zephaniah preached in connection with the Scythian invasion read Jer. 2:14–19, 29–37, and the pathetic presentation of Judah's repentance and acceptance in 3:21—4:2.

Seventeenth day. §153. Read Jer. 11:1–8, which suggests that Jeremiah went about the country preaching in the interests of the book which had been found, and (11:9–23; 12:1–6) is involved in trouble even with his own friends thereby.

Eighteenth day. §154. But consider that after the reformation had done its work Jeremiah would probably lead a prosperous and placid life in close companionship with the good king Josiah. For perhaps twelve or thirteen years this situation prevails, the Jehovah religion being again the national religion with its center at the royal sanctuary, the temple at Jerusalem. A strange event now occurs: the king of Egypt (read II Kings 23:29, 30) is on his road to fight the king of Assyria. Josiah with mistaken zeal meets him at the fatal battle of Megiddo, and is slain. Imagine the severity of this blow to Jeremiah and to the faithful people of Israel. Would they not see in it an inexplicable act of Jehovah? Turn to II Chron. 35:20–24, and note the fuller story of the event coming from a later record than the Book of Kings. Read II Kings 23:31—24:6, and observe that the old idolatry returned under the successors of Josiah, Jehoahaz, and Jehoiakim, the good results of the reformation entirely disappearing. Is this not a natural result, since the return to Jehovah worship did not avert the great disaster in the death of Josiah?

Nineteenth day. §155. But did Jeremiah in this trying time lose his faith in Jehovah, although unable to understand this crushing disaster? Read specimens of his preaching in this period (7:8–20) in which he describes the hypocrisy of his times; 8:4—9:1, a picture of the extreme wickedness of the people and the judgment to come; 10:17–22, a picture of the coming exile with a statement of its cause.

Twentieth day. §156. Read Jer., chap. 25, a sermon on the wine-cup of fury in which Israel's long-continued disobedience is recounted (vss. 1–7); the coming of Nebuchadnezzar to be followed by seventy years' captivity is foretold (vss. 8–14); the announcement that the wine-cup of God's fury shall be drunk by *all* nations is made (vss. 15–31); and terrible judgment is to be visited upon the nations (vss. 32–38).

Twenty-first day. §157. Read II Kings 24:8–17. Note the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, the surrender of the king, and his removal to Babylon, also (vss. 18–20) the appointment of Zedekiah and the character of his reign. In order to secure a better understanding of the conditions in this period read also the address of Jeremiah to Zedekiah (Jer. 27:12–15) and his warning to priests and people (27:16–22).

Twenty-second day. §158. Remembering that there were many false prophets at this time who predicted the overthrow of Babylon, read the very interesting encounter between Jeremiah and Hananiah in which Hananiah foretells the breaking of the yoke of Babylon (28:1–4), and breaks the symbolic yoke which has been worn by Jeremiah (vss. 5–11). An iron yoke is substituted and a bitter warning uttered by Jeremiah (vss. 12–17).

Twenty-third day. §159. Read the account of Nebuchadnezzar's final invasion (II Kings 25:1, 2), noting that the siege continued during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh years of King Zedekiah, and observe the character of Jeremiah's reply to the message of the king sent to him at a critical moment (Jer. 25:1–7). Read also Jer. 22:1–9, the word of the prophet to the royal house concerning the requirements of Jehovah and the consequences that will follow compliance with or rejection of these requirements.

Twenty-fourth day. §160. Remembering that Nebuchadnezzar's army is now in front of Jerusalem, that the fate of the city is practically settled, read Jeremiah's prediction of the return of the remnant (23:1–4), their prosperity and their safety; also his prediction concerning the righteous branch (23:5–8) which will be placed upon the throne of David, and which will prove a savior to Judah. Search further in the book for such hopeful promises as these.

Twenty-fifth day. §161. Read Jer. 37:3–15, and note that Jeremiah is still at freedom, although his constant prediction of disaster could only be looked upon by the royal house as treason, since it would discourage the defenders of the city and lead inevitably to surrender. Note (vs. 5) that Nebuchadnezzar's army temporarily leaves Jerusalem, the king of Judah again takes hope although Jeremiah continues to predict the destruction of the city (vss. 6–10); that the prophet is arrested as a deserter and placed in prison (vss. 11–37). For an account of his condemnation to death read 38:1–6; of his rescue by the eunuch in vss. 7–13, and note that the king again consults him (vss. 14–28).

Twenty-sixth day. §162. While in prison the message comes to Jeremiah to write a special book of comfort, based upon the thought (Jer. 30:3) that the times shall be changed and Israel again restored to her possessions. Read the words of this book, the distress of the period pictured (30:5–7); the promise of relief (vss. 8–11); further description of present conditions (vss. 12–15); and continued prediction of restoration, protection, prosperity, honor (vss. 16–22).

Twenty-seventh day. §163. Continue the study of Jeremiah's book of comfort, chap. 31. Classify the thought of 31:1–30 under the two heads of descriptions of present distress and pictures of future deliverance and glory, and note how the prophet's mind goes from one to the other backward and forward, representing the same thought again and again under different figures. Consider especially the new covenant which is to be established (Jer. 31:31–40), and the coming of the time when divine instruction will be written upon the heart, and each man shall know Jehovah for himself; when Jerusalem will be rebuilt and become inviolable. Notice that Jehovah himself is to accomplish the redemption of the

people in a most marvelous way, and that the new dispensation will far outstrip the old in every respect.

Twenty eighth day. §164. Note in Jer. 32:1, 2, that Nebuchadnezzar's army returns and again lays siege to Jerusalem; that Jeremiah continues to predict the fall of the city (32:3–5), but under these peculiar circumstances, while in prison, purchases a field (vss. 6–15). The perplexed prophet, having made his purchase as he believed according to the instruction of Jehovah, questions as to his purpose (vss. 16–25), and in return receives the assurance (vss. 26–35) that the city of Jerusalem shall be destroyed because it has abandoned Jehovah, but (vss. 36–44) the people shall again be restored and the land become once more fruitful. Read 33:1–36, further messages of comfort proceeding from the prophet-prisoner: Israel shall be restored, Jerusalem become a glory, the land be full of prosperity, and a righteous king shall sit upon the throne of David according to the eternal covenant of Jehovah with David.

Twenty-ninth day. §165. Read the story of the final destruction of the city as related in Jer. 39:1–14; also read Jer., chap. 52, and II Kings 25:1–22, and try to realize that at last the words of Jehovah's prophets, which had been uttered through many centuries, are now fulfilled: that Jerusalem, because of her abandonment of Jehovah, has perished.

Thirtieth day. Shall we now recall not only the work of the prophets whose sermons we have studied this past month, but also those of Isaiah, and raise the question: Does the entire teaching of a prophet in one generation necessarily become the foundation of the preaching of a prophet in another generation? For instance, did not Isaiah teach that the city of Jerusalem could never be entered by a foreign army and did not Jeremiah preach continually the destruction of Jerusalem? Are we to say that these two men were not both true prophets, or shall we see that there was in the work of each prophet a temporary and a permanent element? In the days of Jeremiah, of Zephaniah, and Habakkuk, the lesson of Jehovah's attitude toward sin, of his requirement of righteousness, had led the prophets and their followers to see that not even his own city would be spared if its inhabitants were unfaithful to him and to his commands? So far as he could see, therefore, Isaiah preached the truth. Jeremiah seeing further into the character of Jehovah also preached the truth.

Do we see, therefore, that the conception of God and his requirements was not a settled thing in the mind of the Hebrew people or that of their prophets, but that from generation to generation their great ethical teachers were able to see further and further into the character of Jehovah.

Shall we also see a great difference between Jeremiah and Isaiah in the national conception of religion? Isaiah preaches to the nation; he says, Jehovah will punish the nation. Jehovah will reward the faithful remnant and restore through it the nation. In his mind it is national righteousness which must prevail; but do we not see in this new covenant which Jeremiah announces, a covenant of Jehovah with each individual, the introduction of a higher religious conception? Henceforth, the nation having perished, Jehovah's relationship will be with the individual. No man will be called to account for the sins of others; each must answer to Jehovah for his own life and his own conduct. Shall we not regard this idea of individual responsibility, although not yet well worked out, as a distinct contribution from the prophets and priests of Jeremiah's time?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

READ CAREFULLY.—Answer questions, as far as possible, from memory. Then take your Bible and review with the questions in mind, revising your answers as you read. Should you wish to work for a certificate, send for duplicate blanks and return them to the office of the Institute, Hyde Park, Chicago, Ill. Certificates will be awarded all who answer fifteen questions. An Honor sign will be placed upon the certificates of all who answer twenty questions.

1. Why is it proper to group together such various books as the five studied this month? .....

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2. What is the subject of the prophecy of Nahum? .....

3. What historical event furnishes the background of the sermons of Zephaniah? .....

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4. What is Zephaniah's theory in regard to the Scythian army? .....

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5. How does he propose to avert disaster to Judah from this army? .....

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6. What book as a whole or in part was found in the temple in the reign of Josiah? .....

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7. What is the general character of this book? .....

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8. What theory does it set forth in regard to—

   a) God? .....

   b) The place of worship? .....

   c) The priesthood? .....

9. Name several results which would follow the carrying-out of the theory of this book in regard to the place of worship. .....

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10. Describe the reform of Josiah. .....

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11. In the history of the past of all nations, do laws grow out of immediate needs or are they formulated centuries in advance? .....

12. By what two names are the longer and the shorter prophets commonly described? .....

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13. What is the peculiar problem of Habakkuk? .....

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14. How does it seem to him that Jehovah answers his question? .....

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15. Who is the greatest prophet of this period and when did he commence his work? .....

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16. How was he affected by the death of his friend, King Josiah? .....

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17. What foreign nations were now menacing Judah? .....

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18. What is Jeremiah's counsel to the rulers of his day regarding their attitude toward Babylon? .....

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19. Give a brief account of Jeremiah's misfortunes resulting from his preaching. .....

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20. By what theory does Jeremiah satisfy himself that God can fulfil his promises to Judah even after the destruction of Jerusalem? .....

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STUDY VII

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

PROPHECIES FROM THE PERIOD OF THE CAPTIVITY

§166. Ezekiel speaks words of comfort in Babylon previous to the fall of Jerusalem. Ezek., chap. 11; 17:22–24.

§167. A vision of Jehovah. Ezek., chaps. 1, 2.

§168. More visions. Ezek. 4:1–3, 4–8; chap. 5.

§169. God cannot destroy his faithful ones. Ezek., chaps. 7, 9.

§170. Sermons after the fall of Jerusalem. Ezek. 34:11–31.

§171. Resurrection of dry bones. Ezek., chap. 37.

§172. Jehovah's glory must be vindicated. Ezek., chap. 39.

§173. The New Jerusalem. Ezek., chaps. 40–48.

§174. The announcement of Jehovah's coming manifestation. Isa., chap. 40.

§175. The commission of the Servant. Isa., chap. 41.

§176. The method of the Servant's work. Isa., chap. 42; 43:1–14.

§177. The interpretation of Israel's past history. Isa., chap. 43; 44:1–5.

§178. The Servant's soliloquy. Isa., chap. 49.

§§179, 180. The exaltation of the Servant. Isa. 52:13—53:12.

§181. The vicarious mission of the Hebrew people.

§182. Messages of joy and restoration. Selections from Isa., chaps. 54–66.

§183. Obadiah's arraignment of Edom. The Book of Obadiah.

§184. Jerusalem is paying the penalty for her sin. Lam., chap. 1.

§185. A cry to Jehovah. Lam., chap. 2.

§186. A suggestion of Hope. Lam., chap. 3.

§187. A prayer over fallen Jerusalem. Lam., chaps. 4, 5.

§188. Suffering and glory. Ps. 22.

§189. "We will do the will of God." Pss. 40, 69, 70.

§190. Jehovah's great works in the past comfort me. Pss. 81, 121.

§191. Another great cry out of sorrow. Ps. 38.

§192. "Hope thou in God." Ps. 42.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY

EZEKIEL, ISAIAH, CHAPS. 40–66, OBADIAH

EZEKIEL

First day. §166. It will be remembered that in the days of Jehoiakim in the early period of Jeremiah's ministry Nebuchadnezzar had invaded Judah and carried away into Babylon as captives of war the king and many princes of Israel. Among these captives was a man whose influence upon the religious thought of the Hebrews in succeeding generations was very great. The prophet Ezekiel began his work before the fall of Jerusalem. Endeavor to realize that during this decade the Jews in captivity were constantly expecting restoration to home and prosperity. On the other hand, the Jews in Jerusalem were confident that their brothers in captivity had been driven out by the hand of God because of special sins, they themselves arrogantly assuming superiority. It will be remembered that both in this period and subsequently idolatry was carried on both in Jerusalem and Babylon, and that, on the other hand, the people were filled with a superstitious confidence that God who had pledged himself to them would not allow the city of Jerusalem to be destroyed. The false prophets, of whom we have seen Hananiah as one, are supporting these delusions, and encouraging the people. Out of this situation before the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel preaches in Babylon, confident that he knows the will of God concerning the future. Read Ezek., chap. 11, noting especially vss. 14–20, and note the assumption of the inhabitants of Jerusalem (vs. 15), the promise that Jehovah will gather his people together and restore them to their land (vss. 16, 17), that he will remove all abominations and give them one spirit that they may obey him (vss. 18–20). This chapter is the keynote of Ezekiel's promises to the people. Read, however, Ezek., 17:22–24, and note that, like the prophets before him, he uses the figure of the cedar twig to describe the restoration of Israel; that is, looking about him and remembering the condition of things in Jerusalem, he realizes that the faithful remnant is extremely small. But, however small, it is entitled to all the promises that have been made to the nation, "and this twig shall become a great cedar."

Second day. §167. But does Ezekiel understand the situation? Does he realize that Jerusalem cannot survive the attacks of Nebuchadnezzar? Let us examine some of his sermons with that question in mind. As we read these sermons of Ezekiel, shall we note their very peculiar literary form? In the Book of Isaiah we had splendid oratory, imagery which was real, ideal but conceivable, not fanciful pictures. In Jeremiah we had agitated exhortation. If it had been possible for us to read all of his sermons we should have found further acted sermons, such as that of the yoke. In Ezekiel we have a very different literary medium, that of the vision, sometimes almost inconceivable, and frequently quite out of possibility in nature or man. But each one, taken as a whole, conveyed to the people of Ezekiel's times, in a most picturesque way, great religious lessons. Read Ezek., chap. 1, the description of his vision of Jehovah who is represented as a man (vs. 26) but so surrounded by splendid creatures, so brilliant in

his own appearance, that one feels that the picture would produce upon those to whom it was described a feeling of awe and reverence and readiness to accept a message from so wonderful a God. Read further concerning the call of Ezekiel, chap. 2.

Third day. §168. Read further visions connected with Ezekiel's commission in chap. 3; 4:1–3, 4–8; chap. 5, containing pictures by the use of which Ezekiel hopes to convince the people about him that Jerusalem will not be spared.

Fourth day. §169. For further pictures of the destruction which shall come upon Jerusalem read chap. 7, but note chap. 9. It has been suggested in all of these sermons that certain inhabitants of the city (vss. 4–8) will be spared. To Ezekiel as to Isaiah the conception of God as one who destroys his faithful ones is impossible. To each there were known many of the faithful—to them the promises must be fulfilled.

Fifth day. §170. Remember now that when Ezekiel had been prophesying but a few years (the first captivity occurred in 597 B. C.) the city of Jerusalem fell (586 B. C.). Read the story of the fall in II Kings, chap. 25. The destruction of the city was complete. The king and a majority of the citizens were carried captive, only a poor remnant being left in the land as husbandmen under the governorship of Gedaliah, a large company of even this remnant fleeing to Egypt for fear of further persecution by the Chaldaeans. Can we estimate the significance of this event to the faithful Israelites? To those who had already forsworn Jehovah and attached themselves to idol worship, the hardships were not great, for were they not going to a land where opportunities for colonizing and for building up interesting commerce might arise? What was Jerusalem to them more than any other city where they might live prosperously? For we must realize that the policy of the Babylonians was to settle such groups of conquered peoples in colonies of their own, sending to the deserted lands other peoples to take their places. But to the faithful follower of Jehovah did it not seem that this was the end of all things? How could Jehovah do without his city? What would there be to hold Jehovah to his people if his city were destroyed? How could he be worshiped without a temple? How could he maintain his connection with his people in a foreign land? Can we picture the despair in the hearts of these faithful Jews as they poured into the Babylonian kingdom, led by their conquerors? Can we picture to ourselves the meeting between them and their fellow-countrymen who had preceded them by a few years? What is Ezekiel's thought during this critical situation? We can read only some scattered sermons as representative of the book. Read the account of the faithful shepherd (34:11–31). With this shepherd Jehovah will bring together his scattered sheep (vss. 11, 12); take them back to their own land, and feed them (vss. 13–22); place over them a new shepherd, a representative of David (vss. 23, 24); and establish with them a new covenant (vss. 25–31).

Sixth day. §171. Read also Ezek. 37:1–14, and note the description of the valley of dry bones which represents the nation of Israel as dead (vss. 1–3). But note (vss. 4–7) the promise of God to breathe new life into the dead bones, that is the dead nation, and (vss. 7–14) the pictorial fulfilment of this promise in the resurrection of dry bones, that is, the resurrection of the nation; the resurrection in which Jehovah will manifest his power and presence. Note in vss. 15–28, under another figure, the same lesson, the restoration of Israel; and in connection with this restoration the establishment of purity of mind, the throne of David, and the everlasting covenant.

Seventh day. §172. But the people in this period must have been greatly troubled by the old question of Habakkuk; why should unrighteous nations be victorious over the people of Jehovah? Read with this question in mind the description of the judgment of Jehovah against the nations (Ezek. 39:1–24), and note that the purpose of these world-judgments was the setting of Jehovah's glory among the nations, and an interpretation to the nations and to Israel of the meaning of Israel's captivity (vss. 22–24). But note (vss. 25–29) that while the nations of the earth shall perish Jehovah will pour out his spirit upon his people, and restore them to their land.

Eighth day. §173. It would be unfair to leave the book of Ezekiel without reference to the prophet's wonderful vision of the New Jerusalem, for in his mind he can only conceive of the restoration of Israel as a restoration to the land of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem. Glance through chaps. 40–48, and note that they are given to a most elaborate and detailed description of a new city and a new temple in which offerings shall never cease, the holiest priests shall minister, ideal princes shall rule, no foreigners shall come, and each of the several tribes of Israel shall have his own name and place. Was this dream of Ezekiel ever realized? The actual return to Jerusalem as we shall see later far from fulfilled these expectations. What then was the permanent contribution of Ezekiel? Was it not a message of hope out of despair? Was it not a foreshadowing of something beyond all human conception in his day, which should come to the world as a result of the ministry of Israel? Can one who pictures the situation out of which he spoke, realizing the courage of his idealism, ever despair? To us as to the world of his day Ezekiel brings inspiration which bids us maintain our ideals at all hazards, knowing that high as they may be they are yet lower than the wish of Jehovah for us.

ISAIAH, CHAPS. 40–66

Ninth day. §174. We turn now to the work of the other great prophet of the exile. The book of Isaiah, of which we have already examined the first thirty-nine chapters, falls into two very distinct parts.

We have seen already that the first section dealt with the days of Ahaz and Hezekiah, and with the conquests of the Assyrians. By what literary process we do not know, there have been joined to these chapters in our Bible under the same title chaps. 40–66 which have clearly to do with the Babylonian exile, a later historical situation. The sermons of this great unknown prophet contain the most sublime messages of comfort of the whole Old Testament. They are directed chiefly to the faithful ones who are suffering captivity in Babylon. Shall we picture the situation? Imagine yourself a faithful Jew in captivity. When living in Jerusalem before its destruction you were loyal to the worship of Jehovah,

never having been guilty of idolatry. But notwithstanding your faithfulness you are now in captivity. Your sufferings are intense, since you are driven away from home and native land, and deprived of the opportunity to worship your God. Your brethren on every side reproach you because of the inability of the God whom you serve to relieve your sufferings. Your anguish is increased because you believe this suffering to have been sent upon you by your God. Why has he deserted you? Why has he driven you away, and placed you in the power of your enemies? Had you sinned against him? No. Why was your property distributed to your enemies? Why are they allowed to revile you? Had you been faithless to Jehovah? No. What then is the reason of your suffering? The sins of your nation. For *because Israel abandoned Jehovah*, Israel is now in captivity. Are you then suffering because of others' sins and not because of your own sins? Yes. Do those Israelites who have been faithless to Jehovah suffer because of the captivity? Did they care for the temple worship or for Jehovah? No. Are they well situated in Babylon? Yes. Are their souls tried today because Jehovah has abandoned them? No; for they had already abandoned Jehovah. Are they suffering? No. Who really suffers? Those who sinned against Jehovah or you who have always been faithful to Jehovah? But what is to be the outcome? Is it necessary that you continue to suffer with those who had sinned, and because of their sins, in order that the future may bring a fulfilment of the great promises of Jehovah? If now in distress you turn away from Jehovah, will there be any remnant to whom the promises may be fulfilled? Are you then suffering in order to secure future blessings to those who are to follow you? Read chap. 40, a thrilling announcement to the people that Jehovah is about to manifest himself, that a return to Jerusalem is in sight, that the idols whose influence has seemed to prevail are before him as nothing, that at last Jehovah will do justice to his people.

Tenth day. §175. Remembering now that the nation Israel was sent to convey a divine message to the whole world, that the nation itself has sinned grievously and is being punished, but that a holy remnant still exists, which is faithful to Jehovah and to its mission, read the message of Jehovah to his servant Israel whom he had commissioned to do for him this work for the world—a message delivered through his prophet (Isa. 41:8–14).

Understanding that the servant of Jehovah is the agency through which he is to introduce a new religion into the world, it will be seen that this agency may at different times assume different forms. These are: (1) the nation Israel sent by Jehovah as his servant to teach a message concerning the true God; (2) that portion of Israel which, in spite of the wickedness of the nation as a whole, remained faithful, and whom we may call the "remnant" or spiritual Israel; (3) that ideal servant, the outcome of the Israelitish history, who gathered up in himself the great service which God wished to have performed for the world, and who, therefore, was in a peculiar sense the servant—Jesus Christ.

Remembering (*a*) that the prophet had in mind sometimes one form of this idea, at other times another, that perhaps most frequently he was thinking of the second, and (*b*) that after all the three stand together and may not be separated one from another, since in a true sense a portion of the service was rendered by the Israelitish nation, a portion by the remnant, and a portion by the Christ, read Isa. 41:15–20, in which this servant is represented (1) as an instrument of destruction, bringing ruin upon his enemies, (2) poor and needy and thirsty, but to receive spiritual blessings of every kind, and (3) note the purpose of it all (vs. 20).

Eleventh day. §176. Read Isa. 42:1–13, in which the prophet speaks still further of the servant: My servant will work quietly until his great work has been accomplished (vss. 1–4); I, the God of the world, have chosen him to be a covenant and a light to open eyes and to heal (vss. 5–7); I pledge my honor that this shall come to pass (vss. 8, 9); in view of this great event in the world's history let a new song be sung, let the world rejoice (vss. 10–14).

Read Isa. 42:24, 25, which describes the condition of things in the time of the captivity: Israel, given for a spoil because she has sinned, suffering the effects of Jehovah's anger. But shall Jehovah always remain angry? Will there come a time when his servant shall be lifted up out of wretchedness? Read 43:1–13 in which the promise is given that Israel shall be redeemed (vss. 1, 2); that nations shall be paid as ransom for Israel (vss. 3, 4); that they shall be gathered back from all quarters (vss. 5–9); all shall know that I, Jehovah, am God (vss. 10–13).

Twelfth day. §177. Recalling once more the position of the people in the midst of Babylon, read Isa. 43:14, 15, in which the prophet announces the destruction of Babylon in order that Israel may be redeemed; vss. 16–18, the command uttered by the Jehovah of the Exodus that the long-past deliverance from Egypt be forgotten in view of the greater deliverance which is about to be wrought out; vss. 19–21, because a new and wonderful thing is about to be performed in order that Israel, Jehovah's people, may set forth his praise.

Read Isa. 43:26–28, which informs us again why Jacob had become a curse and Israel a reviling (take the marginal reading of the Revised Version of vs. 28), and then contrast with this in Isa. 44:1–5 the promise of Jehovah to Jacob his servant that the seed of Israel shall be blessed, and the heathen shall esteem it an honor to be reckoned of the Israelites.

Thirteenth day. §178. Read now the servant's own description of his sad experience and his commission in the form of a soliloquy in 49:1–13: God has appointed me to be his servant, his arrow, his sword (vss. 1–3); because, although dejected, I exercised faith in him, he rewarded me by appointing me not simply to Israel, but to all the world (vss. 4–6); though now despised and abhorred the time is coming when kings shall bow down to me. With the aid of God I shall serve as a light to the Gentiles. Israel shall be delivered and returned, and heaven and earth shall rejoice (vss. 7–13).

Think back over the readings of the last six days, and note the uniformity of thought and situation. Everywhere the servant is in distress and in need of encouragement. Everywhere encouragement is given. What is the nature of the encouragement? (1) That the present situation of reproach, reviling, and suffering shall be changed; (2) that Jehovah will again show his power by restoring Israel; (3) that deserts shall be made rivers, the waste places fruitful; (4) that the work which God gave the servant

to do shall surely be accomplished and that this work was the establishment of the true religion for both Israel and the Gentiles; (5) that it included also the opening of the eyes of the blind, and the healing of the lame. Were these promises in some feeble sense fulfilled when Israel was restored from the Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem? Yes, but how far short this fell of their true and full significance. In a fuller and better sense these representations found their fulfilment in the ushering-in of the new dispensation. The commission which God gave to the nation Israel was handed down to the Christian church through its founder and leader, Jesus Christ, and Christianity today is making effort to do the work originally assigned to Israel.

Fourteenth day. §179. We come now to the most sublime of all the pictures of the suffering servant. It should be noted, however, that in every case the sufferings have been depicted in order by way of contrast to represent more vividly the glorious and exalted condition which was to follow. Having in mind now the threefold sense in which the prophet uses at various times the word "servant," read 52:13 which furnishes the theme of the section 52:13—53:12. What is this theme? *My servant shall be exalted very high.* It is, therefore, after all, the exaltation of the servant rather than his humiliation which forms the climax of the passage; but go one step farther and read an expansion of this theme in 52:14, 15: My servant shall pass through a period of shame and reproach, but after this kings will acknowledge his greatness. Here in the expanded form the humiliation is indicated, and in contrast with it the exaltation. Study these three verses as the heading of the chapter which is to follow.

Read Isa. 53:1–3, and note (1) that the servant is not recognized, since no one believes the report which has been given of him, and no one saw in his coming the indication of the power of Jehovah. Why was he not recognized? (2) Because he grew up as a sucker, that is, something superfluous; as a root out of dry ground, that is, without juice or sap; with no comeliness or beauty, and consequently, (3) he was despised and deserted. This was the estimation in which he was held by those about him who did not understand his mission.

Read Isa. 53:4–6, and consider in contrast with the misunderstandings described in the preceding verse the real facts in the case, viz., he was suffering, to be sure, but only for the sins of others, and indeed for the sins of those very same persons who, in their blindness, regarded him as stricken with leprosy. It was they who had gone astray, while on him the iniquity was laid. Compare once more the real situation with what was supposed to be the case, as described in vss. 1–3.

Read Isa. 53:7–9, and note how he was treated, and how he bore the treatment. The servant was treated rigorously without complaining; he was treated unjustly, and yet his contemporaries did not see that he was suffering for his people. His end was an inglorious one.

Fifteenth day. §180. Go back now and compare carefully (1) the theme of the chapter and its expansion. The servant's exaltation after his humiliation (52:13–15); (2) the way in which the matter appeared to those who misunderstood the whole case (Isa. 53:1–4); (3) the real explanation of the facts; the servant was suffering for the sins of others (Isa. 53:4, 5, 6); (4) the harsh treatment which the servant suffered, and, notwithstanding this, his patient endurance (53:7–9). Endeavor now to see if these statements would be in any sense true if applied to spiritual Israel suffering in captivity, and in a fuller sense to the sufferings of the Christ.

Read Isa. 53:10–12, and note the climax. In return for the sufferings of the servant God has purposed to prolong his days, to accomplish through him a divine work. He, the servant, will render many righteous; he will receive a great reward; he will be treated as a conqueror. Now contrast this description of the servant's exaltation with the previous description of his humiliation, and note that even if these words are used primarily of spiritual Israel and the return to Jerusalem as a reward for faithfulness during the captivity, the real significance is to be found in the exaltation of the Son of man who is after all the *ideal servant.*

Sixteenth day. §181. We should remember in examining this book that these sermons were preached not long before the coming of the great conqueror Cyrus, who captured Babylon in 538 B. C. This vision of the oncoming armies, the great warrior who is raised up from the northeast (see 41:2, 25), is Cyrus through whom Israel's return to her own land is assured (vss. 1–20). The shepherd and Messiah of Jehovah (45:1), who is honored by this high title, is Cyrus. Why should Jehovah redeem his people through a foreign invader? He is sovereign and can call whom he will (45:9–13). Shall we gather but a few of the great lessons of this prophet, keeping the situations which have been described from time to time in mind? Does he say to the people in effect, "Jehovah's power is universal; Jehovah is the creator of the universe; Jehovah holds the earth and the sea in his hand; Jehovah is the only God"? Have the other prophets so clearly seen or felt this? Was not Jehovah to them the God of the Hebrews dwelling in Palestine? Could the Hebrews ever have learned that all other gods save Jehovah were nothing, had they not dwelt in this heathen land? Was it not through the intense pain of their separation from Jehovah, and the inspiration of these great religious souls among them, such as Isaiah and Ezekiel, that they came to give an interpretation to their pain which brought hope even in darkness which seemed impenetrable? Is there any other religion save the Christian which can be called the religion of hope? And where in the Old Testament have we found such buoyant, inspiring hope as in the words of this book? Reviewing also the work of the fourteenth to the sixteenth days, discussing (52:13—53:12) the sufferings of the servant and his exaltation, do we not see the epitome of the principle of vicarious suffering and its glory? If those faithful Hebrews had been able to see that through their sufferings the whole world should come to an acknowledgment of the ethical principles of their religion, although many centuries later, how easy would have been the suffering. But this prophet-preacher, although unable to see all that should follow, was led to see and to say that suffering for others brings its reward.

Seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth days. §182. We cannot afford to leave this book without reading some of the scattered prophecies contained in chaps. 54–66. For three days will you read at random, noting the beauty of the descriptions, the recurrence of hope, the further suggestion of the mission of Israel to the world, and the exalted conception of Jehovah as the world creator and the arbiter of the destinies of nations and individuals?

OBADIAH

Twentieth day. §183. We turn now to the prophecy of Obadiah which is little more than a tract, and is introduced at this point since it appears to come from a time when Jerusalem is at the mercy of her enemies, probably after her fall. It is directed against Edom, and is a fierce denunciation of her violence in appropriating the spoils of the city in conjunction with the conquering army. Read this short prophecy with this situation in mind. Are we not learning as we complete each prophetic book how closely the work of the prophet was allied to his own time, and yet how far his vision sometimes took him into the future. Not one prophet of them all was there who failed to see in the movement of nations about him the direct hand of Jehovah.

LAMENTATIONS

Twenty-first day. §184. Perhaps we shall best enjoy studying at this point one of the poetic books of the Old Testament, the Lamentations. We shall have time to give them but a brief glance. They comprise four elegies, chaps. 1, 2, 3, and 4, and a prayer, chap. 5. We do not know the name of the writer, or whether it be one or several, but there was a tradition which assigned the authorship to Jeremiah, this tradition going back to one of the Hebrew writers himself (see II Chron. 35:25). The graphic descriptions and the passionate love would indicate that they came from a period when the fall of Jerusalem with its terrible significance was fresh in the mind of the writer. Read. Lam., chap. 1, and study this lament over Jerusalem: "Bereft by the siege of her glory and her sanctuary" (vss. 1–11), "she feels that the bitter and comfortless doom bewailed" (vss. 12–22) is regarded as the divine penalty of her sin (vss. 5–8).

Twenty-second day. §185. Read chap. 2, in which again the sorrow and suffering are admitted to be a divine judgment (vss. 1–10); bringing inconsolable shame and distress (vss. 11–17); out of which comes a great cry to Jehovah to look upon her agony (vss. 18–22).

Twenty-third day. §186. But in the third poem, chap. 3, note (vss. 1–21) the suggestion of hope because of the love of God; vss. 37–54, a prayer and confession; vss. 55–66, a call to Jehovah for vengeance upon the adversaries of Jerusalem.

Twenty-fourth day. §187. Read chap. 4, containing a vivid picture of the siege of Jerusalem, the fate of the people (4:1–6); the princes (vss. 7–11); the priests and prophets (vss. 12–16); and the king (vss. 17–20). Note in vs. 22 an echo of the prophecy of Obadiah. Read also chap. 5 which completes the prayer beseeching the everlasting God for deliverance from overwhelming sorrow.

Twenty-fifth day. §188. Since our study of many of the books must necessarily be extremely limited, it will perhaps help us in our study of further books of poetry later to take up this month a few of the great psalms connected with the captivity and fall of Jerusalem. We will not at this point discuss the authorship or the general character of the book of the Psalms, but select from it certain great poems which seem to us to reflect the spirit of this period. Recalling the picture of wretchedness and suffering which confronted the Isaiah of the captivity, imagine yourself to be a faithful Jew of this period, and read Ps. 22:1–21, presenting to you a description of the sufferings, physical and intellectual, of the faithful Israelites in their captivity; a picture which may be transferred to any religious soul facing the question, "Why do the righteous suffer?" In striking contrast, however, to the wretchedness and suffering pictured in vss. 1–21, read the description of future glory when suffering shall be ended (vss. 22–31).

Twenty-sixth day. §189. Remembering that you are in the position of one apparently forsaken by God, yet maintaining your faith in the wisdom of his ways, read Ps. 40:1–11, the record of a great effort to do the will of God, the avowal of the writer's trust in Jehovah; but in vss. 12–17, his distress at the conditions about him. Read also for similar representations, Pss. 69 and 70.

Twenty-seventh day. §190. Read Ps. 81, in which the Psalmist recalls his past confusion, declares his faith, and comforts himself with the memory of Jehovah's great works in the past.

Twenty-eighth day. §190 (*cont.*). Read Ps. 121, possibly a pilgrim song inspired by the hope of the return from captivity.

Twenty-ninth day. §191. Read Ps. 38, a cry out of sorrow and oppression.

Thirtieth day. §192. Read Ps. 42, with its refrain, "Why art thou cast down?" Does not the Psalmist's phrase, "Hope thou in God," contain the essence of the message of all the books coming from this period? Can there be any better message for the perplexed mind and sorrowing heart in our own day and generation?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

READ CAREFULLY.—Answer questions, as far as possible, from memory. Then take your Bible and review with the questions in mind, revising your answers as you read. Should you wish to work for a certificate, send for the duplicate blanks and return them to the office of the Institute, Hyde Park, Chicago, Ill. Certificates will be awarded all who answer fifteen questions. An Honor sign will be placed upon the certificates of all who answer twenty questions.

1. What country is the scene of the prophecies of Isaiah, chaps. 40–66, and Ezekiel? .....

2. How did Ezekiel come to be in Babylon? .....

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3. What is the peculiar literary form of his prophecies? .....

4. How did the unfaithful Jews regard their Babylonian captivity? .....

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5. What was Ezekiel's purpose in preaching to the faithful Jews in captivity? .....

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6. What would you consider the great message of Ezekiel? .....

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7. With what wonderful picture are his later sermons occupied? .....

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8. With what book are the greatest prophecies of the exile associated? .....

9. What theory does this prophet advance as to the mission of Israel to the world? .....

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10. State the argument of Isaiah, chap. 40. .....

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11. What is meant by the term "servant of Jehovah," as used by this prophet? .....

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12. What are some of the characteristics of the servant? .....

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13. What is promised the servant after his sufferings shall be over? .....

14. In what estimation was the servant held by those who did not understand his mission? .....

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15. Why was the servant in reality suffering? .....

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16. What is his reward? .....

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17. What great conqueror gives the historical occasion for this book? .....

18. What great conception of Jehovah first strongly appears in the message of this prophet? .....

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19. *a*) What is the subject of the prophecy of Obadiah? .....

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b) What is the character of the Book of Lamentations? .....

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20. Recalling the messages of Isaiah, chaps. 40–66, and the poems which you have studied, what seems to you to be the great message of the writers of this period to the sorrowing people, Israel, and to all those who suffer now? .....

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STUDY VIII

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

THE LITERATURE OF THE RETURN

§§193–197. Characteristics of the Books of Chronicles.

§198. The first returning company. Ezra, chaps. 1, 2.

§199. The dedication of the temple, and local disturbances. Ezra, chaps. 3, 4.

§200. A new decree and reinforcement from Persia, followed by the dedication of the temple. Ezra, chaps. 5, 6.

§201. The work of Haggai. The Book of Haggai.

§§202, 203. The work of Zechariah. The Book of Zechariah.

§204. The expedition of Ezra. Ezra, chaps. 7–10.

§205. The arrival with the treasure. Ezra 8:15 ff.

§206. Ezra's reforms. Ezra, chaps. 9, 10.

§207. The story of Ruth. The Book of Ruth.

§208. The expedition of Nehemiah. Neh., chaps. 1, 2.

§209. More internal difficulties. Neh., chaps. 5, 6, 7.

§210. The reading of the law. Neh., chaps. 8–10.

§211. The message of Malachi. The Book of Malachi.

§212. The new law. The Book of Leviticus.

§213. The story of Esther. The Book of Esther.

§§214, 215, 216. The message of Joel. The Book of Joel.

§§217, 218. The highest point of the Old Testament gospel. The Book of Jonah.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY

CHRONICLES, EZRA, NEHEMIAH, HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, MALACHI, LEVITICUS, ESTHER, RUTH, JOEL, JONAH

CHRONICLES

The group of books to be studied this month contains the history, the prophecy, the law-codes, and two brief stories connected with a period falling between 550 and 400 B. C. The only certain dates are to be gained from the dates of the Persian rulers beginning with Cyrus, 538 B. C., a name which it will be remembered marks the return of the Hebrew people from captivity, and the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. We can scarcely estimate the importance to the religious teachers of Israel of this return, insignificant as it may have been historically. It was to them the beginning of the fulfilment of the glorious promises of Jehovah, and the entrance upon a new era, that of the religious community in which there was no king but Jehovah. Since we must cover so many books in so short a period as one month it will be impossible for us to do more than get a general impression of the great historical and thought movements of the period.

First day. §193. We shall first consider the Books of Chronicles which, with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, form a continuous account of this period. We shall not think it strange if at this time there is a renewed effort on the part of Israel's religious teachers to bring before her a general view of their God-ordained history, and we shall expect to find the religious ideas of this time deepened and expanded on account of the bitter and heart-rending experiences of the faithful Jews during the exile, and their new conception of God as one, universal, and omnipotent. Let us examine I Chron., chaps. 1–9. Will you not in this examination make by means of a simple glance at each chapter an index of the contents? Do you note that the whole section consists of careful genealogies of the various tribes with indications of the portions of land within which they were settled? Note also that chap. 6 is wholly devoted to the tribe of Levi whose privileges are extraordinary. Shall we recall that this was the tribe which, according to the book of Deuteronomy, was henceforth to be the only tribe from which priests might be drawn? Note also that in chap. 9 the writer seems to consider it only important to describe as the first inhabitants of the land, the priests, the Levites, and the porters of the tabernacle. Does not this section give you the impression of being written by one who was interested in the priestly element of Israel's religion, the maintenance of strict priestly regulations, and the attitude of special reverence to those who ministered to Jehovah, on the ceremonial side of her religion?

Second day. §194. Run through chaps. 9–29, noting by the chapter headings at the top of the page that they are devoted to a history of David. Make an index as you proceed, but note in this also, chaps. 23, 24 ff., the very large emphasis upon the importance of the Levites and of the priests. Do we recall any such emphasis in the story of David found in the Books of Kings? Shall we compare specifically the story of David bringing the Ark to Jerusalem found in I Chron., chaps. 15, 16, and II Sam., chap. 6? Does not the account in Chronicles seem to be much more elaborate and formal, and to be the conception of one who lived in a period when religious customs had become more elaborate and fixed?

Third day. §195. Make an index now of II Chronicles from the headings at the top of the page. Examine the index and you will discover that it contains the history of Israel parallel with that of I and II Kings. Select at random the records of the reign of three or four of the kings found in Chronicles, and note the corresponding story in Kings. Do you not find that in Chronicles the account is usually

longer, and more elaborate, and more religious in its tone? Compare, for instance, II Kings 11:4–20, in which the priests necessarily figure, with II Chron., chaps. 23, 24, in which the Levites continually appear. Shall we conclude, therefore, that the writer of the books of Chronicles had before him previous histories of Israel, perhaps the Books of Kings and other documents; that he was writing not what we should call a history but a religious treatise upon the history, and that his great purpose was to emphasize the necessity of worshiping Jehovah in the right way through authorized priests, and by means of authorized ceremonies? Since we have already covered this period of history in the Books of Kings it will not be necessary for us to examine the book further, but simply to note that it closes with the fall of Jerusalem, omitting the history of the exile, and recording the decree of Cyrus of which we have already heard.

EZRA

Fourth day. §198. We now pass to the second book of the historical group, which, with the Book of Nehemiah following it, appears in the Hebrew Bible, as a single book. It is rather a collection of memoirs of Ezra than a systematic history of its times. Let us read chap. 1, noting the decree of Cyrus (vss. 1–4), the response of the Hebrews (vs. 5), and the encouragement and assistance which they received upon leaving Babylon (vss. 7–11). Note in chap. 2 without careful reading the record of the persons who formed the returning company.

Fifth day. §199. Read Ezra, chap. 3, noting that the first effort which is made upon reaching the site of the old Jerusalem is, in accordance with the permission of the decree, to prepare a place for the worship of Jehovah (vss. 1–7); that in the second year of their coming the foundations of the temple are dedicated with great rejoicing, the old people who remembered the former temple being affected to tears (vss. 8–13). In chap. 4 we read of the coming of the people who were already in the land with a request that they, too, being worshipers of Jehovah, may join in the work of building the temple (vss. 1, 2), but that the Hebrews of the return did not desire association with these people who were of mixed race, and their refusal is followed by continual disturbance, the strangers even attempting to turn the kings of Persia against them (vss. 3–5). The purport of their complaint against the Jews is indicated by vss. 7–16, in which the attempt is made to stir up the Persian king, Artaxerxes, this letter resulting (vss. 17–24) in the cessation of the work upon the temple for thirteen years.

Sixth day. §200. Read now Ezra, chap. 5, in which we learn that upon the accession of Darius, king of Persia, at the instigation of pious men in Jerusalem a letter is sent (vss. 1–5) to King Darius, recalling the decree of Cyrus, and pleading that the Jews be allowed to follow out the permission of this decree. Note in chap. 6 the account of the finding of the decree (vss. 1–5), the warning to the people surrounding the Jews to hinder them no longer, and a new decree granting the Jews much assistance and ample protection from Persia (vss. 6–12), the completion of the Temple (vss. 13–15), and its joyful dedication (vss. 16–22). (For continuation of Ezra see tenth day).

HAGGAI

Seventh day. §201. Have you noted as you read in Ezra 5:1, 2 and 6:14 the reference to certain prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, who were influential in bringing about the appeal to Darius for permission to continue the building of the house? It will be interesting at this point to examine the books which bear the names of these two men. Turn to Haggai and read the date of the prophecy which you will see corresponds to the date at which the appeal was made to Darius. Read chap. 1, noting how the prophet appeals to the people to compare with their own comfortable houses the thus far useless foundations of the house of Jehovah (vss. 3–5). Does he not attribute the failure of crops and the general poverty to this neglect of Jehovah's house (vss. 5–11)? The reception of the prophet's message and its effect upon the prominent people of the land we find in vss. 13–15; but note in 2:1–3 that there is discouragement and that Haggai (2:4, 5) encourages the people, recalling the covenant of Jehovah, and giving assurance that all the earth and its possessions are in the hands of Jehovah, and that he himself will give special glory to this house which is building (vss. 6–9). Note also in vss. 20–23 another encouraging message.

ZECHARIAH

Eighth day. §202. In the second prophet of this period, Zechariah, we find another man who loved to present the message of Jehovah in the form of wonderful visions. Noting the date of his prophecy (1:1), read vss. 12–17 with the words of encouragement concerning the building of the temple, remembering that the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem were surrounded by hostile peoples, had no strong political organization, and were living simply as a religious community with life centering about the temple, consider the discouragement which might fill the hearts of those who, remembering the old Jerusalem, compared with it the present city without walls, the poverty of the people, and the inferior temple. Read Zech. 2:1–6, and consider the glorious vision of the future Jerusalem, needing no ordinary walls, but surrounded by a wall of fire with Jehovah in the midst of the city. Note also in vss. 10–13 the eloquent appeal to the inhabitants of Jerusalem to rejoice, for Jehovah himself will dwell in their city; he has already proclaimed it and is about to come.

Ninth day. §203. Note that in the sermons which have been preserved from Zechariah we find exhortation to right living and to brotherly love as a condition of the coming of Jehovah (Zech. 7:8–14). Read also 8:1–8, 16, 17. Consider also as an interpretation of Jehovah's desires at this time 8:19, where religious fasting and feasting are mentioned side by side with the ethical values of love, truth, and peace. Do we not find that the teaching of these two prophets is most practical for the days in which they lived? They were surrounded by difficulties on every hand, but their one thought was that Jehovah had restored Israel to his people; that they must build for him a suitable house, and maintain suitable forms of worship in order that he might at last crown their efforts, by himself coming to abide in a glorified city, whose inhabitants should be righteous.

EZRA (*Continued*)

Tenth day. §204. Returning to the narratives of the period let us read rapidly Ezra, chaps. 7–10, indicating that Ezra himself had not yet appeared in Jerusalem, but had been informed continually as to the progress of the work there. Read vss. 1–5, suggesting that Ezra was of priestly lineage; vs. 6, that he was a scribe, that is, one of those who multiplied copies of the law, and vss. 7–10, that he came to Jerusalem not alone, but with a company, and with the express purpose of carrying on in the new city his profession of writing and teaching the law. Note also (vss. 11–23) that the company carried with them treasure from the king of Persia (vs. 24), that those who serve as priests and otherwise in the temple worship are exempt from all taxation, and that, by the decree of the Persian king, the law of Jehovah is to be binding in Jerusalem.

Eleventh day. §205. Notice from Ezra 8:15 ff. that we have what might be leaves from the diary of Ezra, describing the events of his journey. Having asked for no military escort, but trusting only in the divine guidance and protection of Jehovah, the company reach Jerusalem finally as described in vs. 32, and deliver the treasure to the officials of the city.

Twelfth day. §206. Note, however, that Ezra finds a state of things in the new city which greatly shocks him (Ezra 9:1, 2), a mingling of the people with their surrounding neighbors, which, to him, is a direct violation of Jehovah's command. This question of the mixed marriages, as it is called, became one of the vital questions of the new community. Viewed from a political and social point of view it must have seemed desirable that this struggling band of returned captives should avail themselves of all the possibilities of the rejuvenation of their homes, their families, and their city, that might come from free social and political intercourse with surrounding peoples. They were far too feeble to maintain a successful political independence. Our only information upon the subject is that of a man who saw only one side, that of the violation of Jehovah's decree that the Hebrew race should keep itself absolutely separate in blood from other races. Looking at the matter from a worldly point of view we must yet feel that much hardship was worked by Ezra's decree, recorded in chap. 10, that all men who had married foreign women should put away such wives and children or be shut out of the religious community. The list of those thus offending, found in chap. 10, is probably a very inadequate presentation of the extent to which this intermixture had gone on. Had Ezra's reforms failed would the Jehovah religion have gradually disappeared?

RUTH

Thirteenth day. §207. Perhaps it would be of special interest to read here a short book which is ordinarily considered at an earlier period, because the scenes which it presents belongs, not to the time which we are now studying, but to the time of the Judges. Shall we turn to the Book of Ruth? We shall find in it perhaps, although this is not at all certain, an old story now given a new literary form and attaining great popularity because it asserts that one of the ancestors of David who was, in the minds of the Hebrew people, the ideal king and saint, was the Moabitess, Ruth. We note that her character was a very beautiful one, and that she is represented as being as loyal a citizen of Palestine, upon her advent there with her mother-in-law, as Naomi herself, a Hebrew born. Notice that her introduction to Palestine is through her marriage with a Hebrew. Do we see in this beautiful story a plea for a more liberal policy, from some Hebrew writer, who may, perhaps, himself have been named in the list of those condemned for marriage with non-Hebrew women?

NEHEMIAH

Fourteenth day. §208. Returning now to the narratives of Ezra and Nehemiah, let us read the story of the further reforms instituted by Ezra and by the young man Nehemiah, who comes to Jerusalem at this time, with, perhaps, a more systematic plan for building the new city. We must read rapidly, for the general impression, rather than for minute details. Read in Neh., chap. 1, his story of how he, in the land of his captivity, was overcome by the thought of the distress of his people in the new city, and in his longing to see it restored to something of its former grandeur, he prays that his purpose to assist might be forwarded by Jehovah. It is interesting to recall, also, that Nehemiah was a man in high office in Babylon, but that the glory of this life had not dimmed his love of Jehovah, and his desire to do him service. Read, further (chap. 2), the story of his petition to the king, the granting of his wish to journey to Jerusalem, where he arrived unannounced, and took his survey of the city unknown to its inhabitants. His appeal to them to rise up and rebuild the city in a creditable way is at first met with scorn, but afterward he succeeds in starting the work anew.

Fifteenth day. §209. We may omit chap. 3 as one of detail, and passing to chap. 4, read the story of the conflict with Sanballat, a representative of the neighborhood of Samaria. He, with his friends, laughs to scorn the efforts of the Jews (vss. 1–7), and finally conspires against them, trying to stop the repairing of the walls, and leading many of the Jews to desert. But the forces are again rallied by Nehemiah (vs. 14), and henceforth the work goes on under military protection and by relays, under the careful guardianship of Nehemiah. Had we time we should find further descriptions of Nehemiah's reforms and encouragement in chaps. 5, 6, 7,

Sixteenth day. §210. Read in Neh., chap. 8–10, the crowning ceremony of this period, one which gave the keynote to all the later history of Israel, namely, the reading of the law by Ezra the Scribe. Note in 8:1–8 the assembly, under the authority of the priests and Levites (vss. 9–12). Read vss. 13–18, the celebration of the feast of the tabernacles, a seven-day feast coming down from ancient times. Note in 9:1–3 how at the end of this feast came a fast, while the reading of the law took place, a process consuming a fourth part of the day; how it was followed by a congregational confession of sin and by the worship of Jehovah, led by his special representatives, who give the résumé of the whole history of Israel closed by the covenant in which the people promised obedience to the law

(vss. 5–38). The remainder of the book of Nehemiah is occupied with further reforms. But these we have not time to study, since it is the general character of each of the books of the Bible which we are trying to discover.

MALACHI

Seventeenth day. §211. We have still another prophet of this period of the return whose message we should examine, Malachi, whose name indicates "messenger." He directs his attention at this time to those who have not faithfully observed the requirements of Jehovah, whose lives have not been in accordance with the teachings of the prophets of the past, and who have expected to receive from Jehovah great blessings when they have been unwilling to give him the tribute which was his due, and when they have failed to recognize that obedience, as well as sacrifice, was most important in the eyes of Jehovah. Read this prophecy through, chapter by chapter, and make a few notes of what seem to you to be the specific sins against which Malachi directed his message. Do they seem to you to be the sins which might naturally grow up in this new community which you have been studying?

LEVITICUS

Eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first days. §212. But now should we not like to know something more definite than we have yet discovered as to the law which Ezra deemed so important, which the people accepted in the midst of fasting and mourning for their sins? We have seen how the Book of Deuteronomy came into circulation at a period when priests and prophets were joining hands to bring Israel back with one accord to a pure worship of Jehovah. We have seen that the laws which the Book of Deuteronomy contained were a collection of the common law from the time of Moses down, rewritten by men who were bent on giving not only the laws themselves, but the philosophy back of the laws, men who were seeking to establish forever in the minds of the people a certain conception of God, and of his ethical and religious requirements. May we not expect to find in the law book of this new period the same principle, namely, a collection of the laws covering not only Deuteronomy, and all preceding law, but laws which were still more appropriate to the new community, and which embodied new ideas of God, and new principles of religious life, the product of the thought and experience of the exile? We have in the Book of Leviticus such a law book. Shall we spend four days in examining this book?

1. Run through the Book of Leviticus, noting by the headings at the top of the page the general character of the laws. Is there anything about government, pure and simple? What social conditions are touched upon? Do you not find that almost exclusively these laws have to do with worship? that the headings would indicate that every act of life contains something which pleases or which offends Jehovah, for wherever a matter is taken up it is with relation to the pleasure or displeasure of Jehovah? We shall expect to find, therefore, in this book a set of laws having to do strictly with religion. Would not this be appropriate in a community such as the new Jerusalem, a community which recognizes only Jehovah as its king, and whose life centers about the worship of Jehovah, in anticipation of the time when he himself will come to dwell in the city?

2. Having discovered the subject of the laws let us see if we can discover from them some idea of the conception of Jehovah which was current among Israel's idealists at this time. Note that in chaps. 8, 9 the priesthood is most sacred. None may come near Jehovah but the accepted priests of Jehovah, for do we not see in chap. 10 what emphasis is laid upon the fact that unconsecrated priests who made an offering to Jehovah suffered the death penalty? Glance also at chaps. 11, 14, and 15, and note that the spirit of these laws seems to indicate that in all approach to Jehovah special purification must take place; that no person engaged in the ordinary activities of life may approach him in any way without ceremonial cleansing on the part of the priests; that they may not even come into contact with those who are ceremonially clean until such cleansing has taken place. Do we see in this great emphasis on ceremonial cleanliness a reflection of a conception of God as beyond all else holy, unapproachable, too far removed in righteousness and purity from his people to be approached through any but an authorized priest and elaborate ceremonial?

3. Turn now to chap. 4, and note the law of sin offerings. Consider the significance of the fact that much mention is made of unwitting sin. Read also in chap. 6, and in 7:1–10 of the trespass offering. Do we gather from a casual examination of these passages a feeling that in the minds of the people of this day there was an overwhelming sense of sin? Had not the history of the past led them to see that sin brings punishment, that their God would not tolerate sin, and that their past misfortunes, with the failure to see the realization of the hopes of the prophets, had been the result of their own conduct?

4. Do you notice that in each of the chapters referred to the law is accompanied by, or is an expression of, not only what constitutes sin, but directions as to what shall be done by the sinner, what shall be done by the priest to whom the sinner confesses his sin, and still further, what ceremonies shall be gone through by every member of the community, as a safeguard against the penalty for some unwitting sin? Examine several chapters with this thought in mind. Have we then now the three great religious thoughts of this period, formulated as they are for us by the lawgivers whose work appears in the Book of Leviticus—a holy God, wretchedly sinful man, and propitiation of God as the great end of life?

ESTHER

Twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth days. §213. Three books remain for us to consider, one of these a story whose scene, like that of Ruth, is laid not in Israel, but in this historical period. It is a story of a beautiful Hebrew woman, Esther, and her adventures at the court of the Persian king. No directions for the reading of this book are necessary. Read it as a beautiful story, taking three days for the task. Does it not appeal to you as a wonderful setting forth for this period of the beauty of loyalty to one's country, and sacrifice for one's kindred and those whom one loves?

JOEL

Twenty-fifth day. §214. We shall examine now the work of two prophets whose date we do not know, but who may have written at this or a later time. The prophet Joel, as may easily be discovered from his book, lived at a time when the priests were the rulers whose word was obeyed in Israel. This prophecy reflects in other ways so clearly the situation out of which it proceeds, that it will be worth while to give it rather careful study. Read 1:1–14 and construct for yourself a picture of the times. What is it which the prophet laments? Is it the famine produced by a great drought? Note how the prophet appeals, not directly to the people, but to the priests, to call a solemn assembly and bring all the people together in the house of Jehovah, in order that they may acceptably cry to him for deliverance. Note also in vss. 15–20 the pitiful cry to Jehovah from the prophet himself.

Twenty-sixth day. §215. Read chap. 2 and study the vivid description of the plague, perhaps of locusts, which has devastated the land. In the prophet's poetic language they appear like a fire or like a devastating army. Their advance is irresistible; but (vs. 11) are they not the visitation of Jehovah himself? They can be turned back only by appeal to him. Read the beautiful exhortation to the people (vss. 12–14). Is not this a gracious Jehovah? Does it not reveal a deeply religious feeling, and an appreciation of the lovingkindness of Jehovah, who will remove the scourge if only his people will turn to him? Read another picture of the distress of the people before Jehovah, weeping in the temple before his altar (vss. 15–17). The prophet in his faith sees Jehovah removing the scourge, blessing his people, and bringing them prosperity (vss. 18–20), the people rejoicing in abundant harvests, satisfied with plenty, and full of praise for Jehovah (vss. 21–27). At this point we have a passage which goes beyond the material blessing which the prophet so earnestly seeks and pictures, a time of great spiritual blessing. Is it too much to expect that in this period, when men have seen their hopes of material prosperity disappointed from generation to generation, the great kingdom which they had expected should fade from their vision, and that a day of spiritual union with Jehovah should begin to dawn upon their consciousness? Have we such a vision in vss. 28–31?

Twenty-seventh day. §216. Read Joel, chap. 3, a picture of this later time when universal peace shall prevail, when Jehovah shall come and dwell as the supreme ruler of the world. Note the majesty of vss. 14–17, in which Jehovah's coming is pictured, and in which the prophet means his hearers to infer that even now Jehovah may be coming in judgment to those who will not hear, whether his own people or not, but (vss. 18–20) to those who are faithful to him this coming will bring only peace.

JONAH

Twenty-eighth day. §217. The last book which we shall consider this month is one which has suffered more at the hands of both friends and enemies of the Bible than any other, the book of Jonah. Shall we recall before we read this book, which is, indeed, one of the most beautiful books of the Old Testament, the fact that although the religious life of Israel had strengthened and deepened through all this period the relation of Jehovah to other peoples was yet one about which there was much doubt on the part of the people? Jehovah was the creator and ruler of the universe, it was true, but of what account to him were the peoples of the world except as they ministered to his own people and were used by him as instruments of reward or punishment in their behalf? A time has come, however, when the thoughtful in Israel were forced by observation and by their own theology, that is, "the wicked perish, the righteous prosper," to question whether other nations might find a place in the interests of Jehovah as well as the Hebrew people. In this Book of Jonah we see an old story used to point a lesson which we shall discover as we read. Note II Kings (14:25), that Jonah lived in the very prosperous reign of the second Jereboam, the king against whose splendor of religious ceremonial Amos appealed for an ethical content to religion. We may surmise that about this Jonah, the official prophet to the King Jereboam, many stories might have arisen.[1] Let us read chap. 1, the story of the attempt of Jonah to escape from Jehovah by taking ship to another land, because he was unwilling to perform the service that Jehovah had demanded. Note that the heathen sailors, having decided that Jonah is the cause of the disastrous storm, cast him into the sea, and in doing so called upon Jehovah his God to save them. Their cry is followed by an answer from Jehovah, and the stilling of the storm. They recognize the act of Jehovah and pay him due sacrifice. Read 1:17—2:10. The psalm which is here put into the mouth of Jonah represents in poetic form the prayer of his heart for salvation from his trying situation. Does Jehovah answer his prayer? Here, then, we have another case of one in trouble turning to Jehovah and receiving help.

Twenty-ninth day. §218. Read chap. 3, and note that Jonah after this experience is ready to perform the duty which Jehovah had imposed upon him. Read the story of his trip to Nineveh, where, contrary to all his expectations, in the heathen city of Nineveh king and people heed his warning and with one accord turn to Jehovah, and cry out for mercy, emphasizing their cry by signs of mourning and repentance, sackcloth and ashes, fasting for man and beast. Here, then, for the third time, we see a cry to Jehovah answered by salvation. Chap. 4 is a naïve picture of Jonah's displeasure in that his predictions have been set aside and that Jehovah, contrary to his announcement to Nineveh, has spared the city. The sulky Jonah is himself in turn taught a great lesson, as his assurance is rebuked by Jehovah in the episode of the gourd. Shall we sum up the incidents of the book: (1) heathen sailors in distress, turning to Jehovah are saved; (2) Jonah, a worshiper of Jehovah, turning to him in distress, is saved; (3) Nineveh, a heathen city, turning to Jehovah in repentance and distress, is saved.

Can we find a broader gospel than this in the whole Old Testament? Anyone, Hebrew or Gentile, saint or sinner, whoever he may be, turning to Jehovah in prayer and repentance, receives the sign of his favor, forgiveness, and restoration. Let us cease to regard this book as one exciting only derision

[1] By some this book is thought to be wholly allegorical, Israel, swallowed up by Babylon, and returned to her own land, being the event typified.

and question as to the historicity of its events, and regard it as the vehicle of the most perfect gospel of the Old Testament, the love of God to all mankind.

Thirtieth day. It is not necessary to make an extended résumé of the books of this period in review. But will you not spend the next two days in reviewing the work of the month with the special object of getting firmly fixed in your mind the great problems which were confronting the people of this day: the problem of race intermixture; the problem of the postponed fulfilment of the glorious promises of Jehovah; the problem of the value of material blessings as compared with spiritual blessings? What do the books of this period suggest upon these great themes? Can we see here the formation of the shell of ceremony which was to hold the germ of spiritual life through the trying period in which Israel is passed from hand to hand, in the changing panorama of nations, a period in which, had it not been for their profound religious convictions, and their undying hope for national restoration, they might have been lost to the world, and with them the foundations of Christianity.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

READ CAREFULLY.—Answer questions, as far as possible, from memory. Then take your Bible and review with the questions in mind, revising your answers as you read. Should you wish to work for a certificate, send for the duplicate blanks and return them to the office of the Institute, Hyde Park, Chicago, Ill. Certificates will be awarded all who answer fifteen questions. An Honor sign will be placed upon the certificates of all who answer twenty questions.

1. To what period of Israel's history do the books studied this month belong? .....

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2. What books contain the historical records of this period? .....

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3. What is the general character of these records as compared with the Books of Kings? .....

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4. Name some reasons for supposing that the writers of these books were particularly interested in religious ceremonial. .....

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5. What event is described in chaps. 1, 2, of the Book of Ezra? .....

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6. Describe the scene at the dedication of the foundations of the temple. .....

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7. Why was the work on the temple stopped? .....

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8. What two prophets made heroic exertions to revive the interest in the building of the temple? .....

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9. What is the peculiarity of the form of Zechariah's prophecies? .....

10. For what reason do you think that this form of prophecy would especially appeal to the people of Zechariah's day? .....

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11. What ethical conditions does Zechariah demand as a condition of the coming of Jehovah? .....

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12. What was Ezra's great contribution to the life of this period? .....

13. Against what social conditions did Ezra set himself? .....

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14. What story-books have we which were possibly a product of this period? .....

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15. Who was associated with Ezra in the building of the new city? .....

16. Name some of the sins against which Malachi directed his message. .....

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17. In what book do we find the law of Ezra's time recorded? .....

18. *a*) What conception of Jehovah do we see reflected in this law? .....

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b) What in the sight of God was a man's duty? .....

19. *a*) What prophet in this period bases his call for repentance upon a great drought and loss of harvest?

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b) What is the great lesson of the book of Jonah? .....

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20. Name some reasons why it seems to you that the idea of God in this period is more spiritual than in the preceding periods .....

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STUDY IX

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

THE WRITINGS

§219. The construction and purpose of the Psalter. Selections from the Psalms.
§220. Psalms of Nature. Pss. 8; 19:1–6; 29.
§221. Reflections upon life. Pss. 90, 91.
§222. Songs of deliverance. Pss. 30, 45, 46, 47, 48.
§223. Psalms of worship. Pss. 135, 136, 137.
§224. Psalms of malediction. Pss. 69, 137.
§225. Historical psalms. Pss. 105, 106.
§226. Psalms of repentance. Pss. 51, 102.
§227. Psalms of petition. Pss. 25, 64, 70, 22.
§228. Royal psalms. Pss. 72, 132.
§229. Psalms of the glorious future. Pss. 95–100.
§230. The construction of the Book of Proverbs.
§231. Sayings in relation to man. Selections from Proverbs.
§232. Man in his relation to other men. Selections from Proverbs.
§233. The duty of man to himself. Selections from Proverbs.
§234. The duty of man to others. Selections from Proverbs.
§235. The rewards of conduct. Selections from Proverbs.
§236. The conception of God. Selections from Proverbs.
§237. Doctrinal conceptions. Selections from Proverbs.
§238. The story of Job. Job, chaps. 1, 2.
§239. The rebellion of Job. Job, chaps. 4, 5.
§§240–242. The dialogue with the friends. Job, selections from chaps. 8–38.
§§243, 244. The dialogue with Jehovah. Job, chaps. 38–40.
§245. The problem of skepticism. The Book of Ecclesiastes.
§246. The problem of pure love. The Song of Songs.
§247. The visions of Daniel. Selections from the Book of Daniel.

DIRECTIONS FOR STUDY

PSALMS, PROVERBS, JOB, ECCLESIASTES, THE SONG OF SONGS, DANIEL

With the work of this month we enter upon a study of a series of books which were classified in the Hebrew Bible as the Writings. The books of this class appear chiefly in poetic form, and, in order that we may better enjoy and understand their contents as we read, let us observe the special characteristics of Hebrew poetry. The Hebrew poet depended for his poetic effect not upon the repetition of words of similar sound, as rhyme, but upon a device which we call parallelism—a relation of lines in the poem which belongs to the *thought* rather than the *form*. This parallelism may be expressed in three different ways: Synonymous parallelism, in which the thought of one line of poetry is repeated in the following line in different words; antithetic parallelism, in which one line may present the affirmative expression of a thought and the following line the negative. In other words, there must be antithesis between the *meaning* of the lines. The third form is called synthetic parallelism, in which the thought of a line is completed in a later line or lines. A careful observance of this peculiarity in form will lead you to see that in many cases where you would naturally look for additional thought on the part of the poet, he is simply expressing the same thought in a different form. This relieves the poem from much apparent complexity in its interpretation.

From the foregoing it will be seen that a version of the Bible, in which the form of the Hebrew poetry is clearly expressed typographically, will be much easier to use in the study of this course. We would urge all students to use the American Standard Revised Version of the Bible, which can be purchased at any good bookstore in varying styles and at various prices.

May we also suggest that in all study of the Bible, one of the most helpful exercises is that of trying to rewrite in one's own words the thought of a verse or series of verses? While it is a thankless task to try to reduce to simple prose such expressions of deep religious emotion as those contained in the Psalms and in view of the necessarily unsatisfactory result of his work the student shrinks from trying to restate the thought of the poet, it is still of great assistance occasionally to take one of the Psalms and go carefully through it, writing out in simple prose the thought of the poet. In no other way can one weigh the expressions with calm judgment and get at the real thought of the poem.

THE PSALMS

The first book which we shall consider in this series of writings is the book of Psalms, a collection of prayers and songs expressing the religious consciousness of the pious Israelite. It was the hymn book of the second temple, the temple of the Jewish community, in the building of which the work of our last month so interested us.

Just as in any nation great songs and poems having their rise in the inspiration given by some great national event, by some deep personal experience, or by some unusual sympathy between the human mind and the world of nature, so the songs of the Hebrews came into existence, some, perhaps, at a very early date, others at the close of centuries of disaster, others at intervals between these two extremes, until in the late period of Israel's history, when greater importance was attached to the ceremonials of worship than at any preceding period of her history, the hymn book in its present form was compiled, probably from previous collections, possibly with free addition and subtraction by those engaged in its compilation. Granting this question of the gradual growth of the Psalter through all the centuries of Israel's history, we might expect to find in this collection a great variety of songs; for will there not be a reflection of the minds of many poets living in very different historical periods? But we must recall that we are dealing with lyric poetry and that lyric poetry has in it a universal element which relates it to all life. We find, therefore, in the Psalter a collection of poems, the particular origin of any poem in which it is very difficult to determine. The superscriptions in the Psalter do not belong to the original book, but were added at a later time, and had we opportunity to study them carefully, we should feel that they have a very unsatisfactory bearing upon the authorship or the origin of the Psalter. But in our work with this course it is not the question of a specific dating of each of the psalms which will interest us, but rather a search for some expression of the religious spirit of the Psalter, and the suggestion of the religious teachings which seem to us most significant. Since we have but ten days to devote to the study of this book let us take up as many of the psalms as our time will permit, selecting them from groups of the psalms, each having a different general construction or significance.[1]

First day. §219. In order to make a little more clear in our own minds the idea of the Psalter as a collection of psalms, glance through the Psalter and note that it is divided into five books, each book ending with a doxology (see Pss. 41, 72, 89, 106, and 150). For indications that the Psalms were intended for public worship, note some of the superscriptions, as of Pss. 42, 45, 46, 52, 53, 56, 57, and others, in which not only the fact that it was intended for musical use is indicated by the words for the chief musician, but also a particular tune or style of music is indicated. Read also Ps. 24 which falls so easily into antiphonal sections, as, for instance, vs. 1 answered by vs. 2; vs. 3 answered by vs. 4; vs. 5 answered by vs. 6; vs. 7 by vs. 8; and vs. 9 by vs. 10. We can easily imagine this sung by choirs responding to each other. It would interest you to make further investigations into the form of the book and note psalms such as 136 with its constantly recurring reference.

Second day. §220. In all nations and in all ages the phenomena of nature have made a deep impression upon the poets. To the poets among the Hebrews to whom there was no distinction between nature and the direct act of a personal God, we can easily understand that the storm, the starry sky, the clouds, the succession of the seasons, the instinct of animals, being interpreted as immediate acts of their own God, would call forth the highest form of poetry. Let us read Ps. 8 as one of the best examples of Hebrew thought upon Jehovah in his relation to the material world and to man. The central point of this poem is the dignity of man as the last and greatest of God's creations, and the place of authority which has been given to him in the universe—"Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands" thus exalting him to a place but little lower than God himself. Read also Ps. 19:1–6, a poetic rhapsody upon the phenomena of the heavens, but note that there as everywhere the interest in nature is that of one who sees in it the glory of God. Read also Ps. 29, a majestic description of a great storm in the mountains of Lebanon.

Third day. §221. But there are also poems in every tongue which may be called reflective, which are not so picturesque, but which are the result of quiet moments of meditation rather than the product of moments of supreme impressions. For such a poem read Ps. 90, presenting the philosophy of life of one who has grown old, and looking back over the past, sums up his philosophy. How wonderful is the contrast drawn between the everlasting, all-powerful God and the transitory and ephemeral life of man! But the conclusion shows us the heart of one who believes that the highest end of man is to reflect the glory of Jehovah, and to perpetuate upon the earth the people of his choice. Read also Ps. 91, the poet's conception of the wonderful relationship between Jehovah and his chosen ones which guarantees their protection through all time and in all circumstances. Ps. 16 suggests that because the writer has chosen Jehovah he has no greater good to wish for; he is secure and happy, yea, more; he is ready to question whether with this close relationship between himself and Jehovah it may not be possible that he, like God, may see no end to his life, in the presence of Jehovah.

Fourth day. §222. It would be strange if, in a history in which great crises had been so frequent, in which Jehovah had so graciously and miraculously delivered his people from dangers, there should

[1] The following classification is given by John E. McFadyen in his *Introduction to the Old Testament:*

1. Psalms of Adoration, including (*a*) adoration of God for his revelation in nature, 8; 19:1–6; 29; 104; (*b*) adoration of him for his love to his people, 33, 103, 111, 113, 115, 117, 147; (*c*) praise of his glorious kingdom, 145, 146, ending with the call to universal praise, 148, 150.

2. Psalms of Reflection, (*a*) upon the moral order of the world, 9, 10, 11, 14, 36, 37, 39, 49, 52, 62, 73, 75, 82, 90, 92, 94; (*b*) upon divine providence, 16, 23, 34, 91, 112, 121, 125, 127, 128, 133, 139; 144:12–15; (*c*) on the value of Scripture, 1; 19:7–14; 119; (*d*) on the nature of the ideal man, 15; 24:1–6; 50.

3. Psalms of Thanksgiving, most of them for historical deliverances, e.g., from the exile or from the Syrians in the second century B.C., 30, 40, 46, 48, 65, 66, 67, 68, 76, 116, 118, 124, 126, 129, 138; 144:1–11; 149.

4. Psalms in Celebration of Worship, 5; 24:7–10; 26, 27, 42, 43, 84, 122, 134.

5. Historical Psalms, (*a*) emphasizing the unfaithfulness of the people, 78, 81, 106; (*b*) emphasizing the love or power of God, 105, 114, 135, 136.

6. Imprecatory Psalms, 58, 59, 69, 83, 109, 137.

7. Penitential Psalms, 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.

8. Psalms of Petition, (*a*) prayers for deliverance, preservation, or restoration, 3, 4, 7, 12, 13, 17, 25, 31, 35, 41, 44, 54, 55, 60, 64, 71, 74, 77, 79, 80, 85, 86, 88, 120, 123, 131, 140, 141, 142; (*b*) answered prayers, 22, 28, 56, 57.

9. Royal Psalms, (*a*) king's coronation, 21; (*b*) marriage, 45; (*c*) prayers for his welfare and success, 20, 61, 63; (*d*) his character, 72, 101; (*e*) dominion, 2, 18, 110; (*f*) yearning for the messianic king, 89, 132.

10. Psalms Concerning the Universal Reign of Jehovah, i.e., messianic psalms in the largest sense of the word, 47, 87, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

not be psalms celebrating these great deliverances—psalms of thanksgiving. Let us read, with this thought in mind, Ps. 30, the experience of a soul delivered from trouble and lifting itself in grateful praise to Jehovah for his deliverance. See also Ps. 45, a song of gratitude for a goodly king, out of whose reign great glory for Israel is expected. Shall we recall the great deliverance of the city from Sennacherib in the days of Hezekiah (if you do not easily recall this, refer to the incident as it is treated in the work of the sixth month)? Would it not be natural that after so great and miraculous an event as this, special paeans of joy should have found voice in permanent psalms? Although we have no definite knowledge on the subject, we can very easily relate to this time Pss. 46, 47, and 48. Read them carefully, with the great rejoicing following the departure of the Assyrian army in mind.

Fifth day. §223. But since the Psalter was intended as a book to be used in the worship of the temple, we may look for psalms which seem to be particularly written for purposes of praise. Shall we read in this connection Pss. 134, 135, 136, 138?

Sixth day. §224. We find in the Psalms not only praise, thanksgiving, and adoration, and a recognition of Jehovah in all the phenomena of the universe, but also a few psalms which attribute to Jehovah a spirit of vengeance and of cruelty which we cannot overlook. These psalms we must therefore account for. Shall we reflect upon the feelings of injury, oppression, and insult that such psalms reveal in Israel's loyal poets? Shall we recall the ineradicable tendency in human nature to seek revenge for injury committed? Shall we remember that the Hebrew people were deeply impressed with the idea that sin cannot go unpunished by Jehovah; that a righteous Jehovah must by his very nature inflict punishment upon the unrighteous? Reflect now that we have as yet seen scarcely a trace of any doctrine of a life beyond the present life in the thought of the Hebrews. Would it not be a logical result from these conditions of thought, that the punishment of the wicked, which, by their theology the Hebrews thought of as inevitable, must be carried out in this life? Could the faithful Jews, without the spirit of the gospel which permeates our own Christian religion, get away from this conviction that Jehovah must and would inflict disaster upon the wicked? In this connection read Pss. 69 and 137.

Seventh day. §225. In our own literature and that of other nations we frequently find historical stories woven into verse. The Hebrews were fond of recapitulating the God-ordained history of their nation in such verses. Read as examples of historical psalms Pss. 105 and 106.

Eighth day. §226. Remembering the deep sense of sin which permeated the religious spirit of the Hebrews in the days after their return when they had learned to interpret all their past misfortunes as the result of their own conduct, note in Ps. 51 an expression of a soul which out of the depths of despair in its own sinfulness lifts up a prayer for forgiveness. Ps. 102 expresses the same deep sense of sin, and of the justice of Jehovah which, after punishment, will bring restoration.

Ninth day. §227. Prayer is the essence of religion. The prayers of a people or individual are the truest index of their religious life. We should, perhaps, find in the Psalter a larger proportion of prayer than any other phase of religious expression. We have time to examine only four of these great prayers: Ps. 25, a prayer for deliverance from threatening enemies and for such instruction from Jehovah as will bring peace and courage and union with God; Ps. 64, a prayer for deliverance from secret enemies plotting together to overthrow the petitioner; Ps. 70, a prayer for deliverance from unmerited shame and dishonor; and Ps. 22, a prayer out of such a distress as the poet's art is scarcely able to describe. If you have time to do so it will interest you to examine as many of these prayer psalms as possible, endeavoring to discover for what the Psalmist prayed.

Tenth day. §228. The king in Israel was, in a true sense, the representative of Jehovah. The devout men in Israel never wholly lost the feeling that the king was but the regent of Jehovah. The king was therefore especially to be blessed by Jehovah. Several of the psalms especially set forth the glories of the king; prayers for his welfare and a deep yearning for the ideal king who shall at some future time bless Israel. Two interesting royal psalms are Pss. 72 and 132.

Eleventh day. §229. The glorious future which had been so fully and continuously pictured by the prophets must of necessity appear in the songs of the nation. We should remember, however, that a large part of the writings of the prophets is practically poetry. Therefore the so-called poetic books of the Bible may not be expected to contain many of the highest poetic utterances of the prophets. The thought, however, of the universal reign of Jehovah is expressed in many psalms. Read in this connection Pss. 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. Compare in your thought these psalms with the songs of Isaiah, who so frequently raises the note of praise to Jehovah, the creator and ruler of the world.

PROVERBS

Twelfth day. §230. We come now to a book which is the first to introduce to us the work of a class of writers who made a large contribution to the thought of the Hebrews. Perhaps the very nature of their work renders it probable that we have lost a larger amount of this literature of the Wise than of any other class of literature in Israel. Read carefully the section relating to the work of the wise men in the introduction.

Shall we think of the book of Proverbs as a collection of the words of wisdom of many generations of these wise men? In an age when teaching was wholly oral, do we not see how important the words of these wise men would become, and shall we not expect that sayings will be repeated many times, will become, perhaps, more and more sententious as they pass from generation to generation, and will finally take on written form and gradually be bound into collections? The editor of the book of Proverbs seems to have taken several of these collections and put them together. Note the divisions into which the book falls because of this method of collection: (1) chaps. 1–9; (2) 10:1—22:16; (3) 22:17—24:22; (4) 24:23–34; (5) chaps. 25–29; (6) chap. 30; (7) 31:1–9; (8) 31:10–31. As we investigate these different collections, note that each has its superscription or introduction. Turn now to chaps. 1–9, which seem to be an introduction to the book. Read rapidly chaps. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, and 9, or such a part of them as you have time for. Do we not find in this section an impressive appeal to secure wisdom and

avoid folly? But what is this wisdom which is so extolled? Do we find the answer to this question in 1:7, 29; 2:6; 3:5, 6, 26 and similar statements? Is not knowledge of Jehovah and dependence upon him represented as the essence of wisdom?

Thirteenth day. §231. It will interest us to see what the Sages of Israel had to say in their proverbs in regard to man. Shall we read some of the sayings in relation to the nature of man: 27:19, the unity of the race; 21:2 and 14:12, the fallibility of his judgment compared with God; 27:20, his discontent; 14:10, the isolation of sorrow; 15:15, the blessing of a cheerful mind; 14:13 and 17:22, the mind and the body; 22:6 and 29:17, parent and child; 1:8, 9, the value of instruction; 15:20, the wise son; 19:14, the prudent wife; 29:21, the spoiled servant; 17:2, the wise servant?

Fourteenth day. §232. You will have discovered by these examples that the wise men dealt in these proverbs, not with religion on the side of worship but rather, as we should say, with the common ethics of life: man in his relation to other men, the domestic circle, education, industrial life, and political life. Run through chaps. 10–22 and see if you can find some saying which refers to each one of these conditions.

Fifteenth day. §233. Shall we now examine some of the sayings which have to do with the duty of man, first, to himself: 20:13; 28:7; 23:29–35; having to do with temperateness, 29:11; 16:32; 14:30; and 22:14; self-restraint, chaps. 5, 6, and 7; avoidance of temptation, 4:25–27; 4:14–17; the beauty of meekness, 21:24; 16:18; purity of heart, 21:8, and 22:11.

Sixteenth day. §234. What do the wise men of Israel think concerning the duty of man to others (11:12; 28:8; 24:17, 18; 3:30; 29:5; 12:19; 20:19; 26:18, 19; 10:18; 22:2; 3:31, 32; 27:10; 24:10–12; 15:1; 11:17)? Do we not find in these proverbs a very practical philosophy of life, showing that the fundamental ethical principles underlying peaceful relationship with one's fellow-men were known and practiced by the Hebrews? We miss, however, the great reason given for such conduct in the teaching of Jesus, namely, brotherly love. It is, rather, on the part of the writers of the Proverbs a question of expediency.

Seventeenth day. §235. What are the rewards of human conduct: 11:31; 11:18; 28:10; 24:20; 4:18, 19; 10:7; 12:21; 13:25; 10:25; 10:24; 10:2; 21:18? Do we not find here the philosophy which we have met continually, namely, "the wicked perish, the righteous prosper"?

Eighteenth day. §236. What about the testimony of the Proverbs to the conception of God: 30:1–4; 15:3; 5:21; 19:21; 15:9; 3:12; 3:19, 20; 16:9; 21:31; 16:4; 18:10; 21:2; 10:3; 15:25; 11:1; 15:8; 15:25; 16:3; 30:5, 6? Do we find here a picture of God reflecting the same ideas as those of the prophets, but having little to do with the ceremonial side of religious life?

Nineteenth day. §237. By careful search we would find a few references which might be interpreted as doctrinal references concerning sin, sacrifice, prayer, a future life: 21:4; 14:34; 20:9; 28:13; 15:8; 28:9; 15:29; 21:16; 14:32; 27:20. But have we not discovered that the whole universe is touched in the work of the Sages? The common life of man is reflected in sententious sayings, the result of meditation upon all the phenomena of life. Unlike the sayings of other nations, however, we find pervading all these the accepted theory that God is the ruler of the universe and that the right attitude toward him is the essential thing in life. Is not this a philosophy for the modern world as well as for the ancient?

JOB

Twentieth day. §238. We shall now take up the study of three books, also the work of the Sages, but not, like the Proverbs, collections of sayings but the work of individual writers. It was the Sages who dealt with the problems of life in a philosophical way. We have seen that the prophets, out of their observation of life and the inspiration of their relation to Jehovah, wove theories concerning the nation's future and the character of Jehovah. We have seen upon what a solid foundation their conception of Jehovah rested and how, from generation to generation, the understanding of the character of God became more clear and definite and more helpful in human life. The sages, too, saw all that the prophets saw, and while not regarding themselves as especial messengers of Jehovah, thought upon the same problems and ideals, and expressed themselves as fully.

The book which we shall now study, the book of Job, is the greatest contribution of the sages. It is the discussion of a problem which we can readily see was a vital problem in the religious thought of the Hebrew—"Why do the righteous suffer?" We have only to recall that from the time of the exile onward the fate of the righteous among the Hebrew people was more trying, more full of despair, than that of the wicked who had deserted Jehovah and had contented themselves with life in Babylon. The righteous suffering in captivity yet faithful to Jehovah, the righteous returning to the site of their old city, yet meeting failure and discouragement on every hand in their efforts to restore it, the righteous held in derision by their more prosperous neighbors, the righteous scattered through all the nations of the earth. As the years passed on these were the true sufferers in Israel. "Why do the righteous suffer?" Can we realize the depths of sorrow from which this cry went forth to God? The author of the Book of Job has taken as the basis of his discussion an old story, possibly well known to the Hebrews, in which we see Job, a righteous man, deprived through the permission of God and the instrumentality of Satan, of all which has made life dear to him, save his own sense of righteousness. Read Job, chaps. 1, 2.

Twenty-first day. §239. Read Job 3:1–26, noticing that the section falls naturally into three divisions, of which the first, vss. 1–10, may be summed in the words, "Oh, that I had never been born;" the second, vss. 11–19, "Oh, that I had died from my birth;" the third, vss. 20–26, "Oh, that death might come to me, miserable and wretched man that I am." Consider further (1) how in this outburst Job pictures his own suffering, (2) the tone of mind which it exhibits, and the contrast between this, and that of the preceding chapters, and (3) the natural effect of such speech upon his friends.

Twenty-second day. §240. Remembering that Job's three friends were before him, read the speech of Eliphaz, chaps. 4, 5, a godly prophet, who has seen a prophetic vision of man, weak, ephemeral,

necessarily unrighteous and foolish before God. In chap. 5 note that Eliphaz exhorts Job to cease complaining, to recognize himself as foolish and rebellious, to seek God and acknowledge his sin, and receive forgiveness. But note, chap. 6, that Job's reply indicates that he has no sense of unrighteousness, but believes himself wholly innocent.

Twenty-third day. §241. Read now Job 8:1–22, the speech of the second friend, Bildad, who also believes Job to be guilty of sin, to whom Job replies in 9:1—10:22: "I am innocent, but unable to contend with God." With chap. 11 Zophar takes up the accusation: 11:1–20, Job's sufferings are even less than he deserves. To him again in chaps. 12, 13, 14, Job replies, and challenges God to show him that he is unrighteous. Have we not in this picture a man who has all his life according to his best standards done his duty? He cannot be true to himself and to God, and confess himself wicked, for righteousness has been to him a series of acts, each of which he has fulfilled to the limit of his ability. Had we time to follow the argument of the three cycles of speeches which are presented by the friends we should find that the keynote of the theology or life philosophy of the three friends is "all history teaches that the wicked suffer and the righteous prosper, inspiration from God shows the same philosophy. You, Job, are suffering. Therefore you, Job, must have sinned. Confess it, be forgiven and restored."

Twenty-fourth day. §242. Let us turn to the last cycle of speeches, however, and notice how the arguments of the friends have no effect upon Job, save to make him more miserable, 16:1–17; 16:18—17:2. Read his cry to God to establish his innocence, "not before man only, but before thyself, O God (16:18—17:2)." In 19:1–29 we see him crying out, "All is darkness. God counts me as an enemy. There is no help in this world;" but in vss. 25, 27, "I believe that God will yet vindicate me and show my innocence upon earth after my death, and when my flesh shall be destroyed, I shall see God and be at peace with him, and he with me." This is the highest point which Job reaches in his belief in the righteous character of God which will surely vindicate him in the end even though it be after death.

Twenty-fifth day. §243. Read now the statement of Job (21:1–34), that the premises of the friends are all wrong; that in his observation of life it is not true that God punishes the wicked and rewards the righteous, for many wicked go to their graves in peace and honor. The friends have generalized upon a false basis, which practically all the theology of Job's time verified. In the third cycle of speeches the discouragement of the friends results in the failure of Zophar to appear. Job has long since failed to find any help or comfort or wisdom in what they say to him. At this point in the book is inserted a wonderful chapter on wisdom (chap. 28). The object of this chapter was, perhaps, more clear in the mind of the writer of the book than in our own, but at all events it sets forth a philosophy of wisdom which is the finest to be found in all the literature of the Hebrew wise men. We turn from it to chap. 30, in which Job pictures his ignoble condition and recalls his former days of prosperity. Are we not to infer from the progress of our work thus far that the writer of the book of Job was in sympathy with Job, that he was seeking through the speeches of Job to present a philosophy of life contrary to the philosophy of the friends, and to him the only satisfactory solution of the problem of the suffering of the righteous? It will be necessary for us to pass over the speeches of Elihu who is introduced after the failure of the friends to establish their theory, and who asserts that the purpose of affliction is to turn men from sin, and exhorts Job so to interpret his suffering. He contributes nothing new to the argument. But is Job to be left to die in his sufferings with no answer from God? The dramatic action now reaches its highest point; the answer of Jehovah comes out of a great storm. Read chap. 38. It is the word of Jehovah himself that we are now to study. Read (1) 38:2–7, in which Jehovah announces himself as ready to answer the challenge of Job. He answers by asking Job to declare where he was when the foundations of the earth were laid amid the songs of angels and stars. Was Job present at the creation? (2) 38:8–11, perhaps Job, if he knows, will tell who created that great giant, the ocean, breaking forth from the earth's interior, permitted to rage, but only within set bounds? Read 38:12–15: Who is it who brings the morning with all that is involved, or 38:16–18: has Job walked in the depths of the ocean, has he seen the gates of Sheol, can he comprehend the breadth of the earth? Read now what is perhaps the most beautiful section of the book, 38:19–38, in which there is given (including now 38:1–17 also) a rapid sketch of inanimate nature, the wonders of earth and sea, the dawn, Sheol, the phenomena of the heavens, light, darkness, snow, hail, rain, lightning, all of which show God in his power, might, wisdom. Perhaps Job created all these and regulates their going and coming.

The poet now leaves the realm of inanimate nature and descends to the animal kingdom. This review includes 38:39—39:30; (1) the lioness, vss. 39, 40; (2) the young raven, vs. 41; (3) the goats and hinds of the rock, 39:1–4; (4) the wild ass, vss. 5–8; (5) the wild ox, vss. 9–12; (6) the ostrich, vss. 13–18; (7) the war-horse, vss. 19–25; (8) the hawk, vs. 26; (9) the eagle, vss. 27–30.

Twenty-sixth day. §244. Gathering his whole strength the speaker turns to Job and demands (40:2), "Do you still arrogantly demand the contest with God, now that you know his power?" Job (40:3–5) having seen God in another light, replies most humbly, and acknowledges his meanness and his inability to answer. Although Job no longer wishes to contend with God, it is necessary that his charge against God of unrighteousness be refuted; and so we have a second speech of Jehovah. Read 40:7–14. Will Job be willing to take God's place as ruler of the world? If he will show his ability thus to dispense justice God will recognize his power to act independently. But really, now, can Job contend with the God who created such creatures as the hippopotamus and the crocodile? Read the wonderfully strong and striking description of the hippopotamus (40:15–24) and the crocodile (41:1–34). Read now Job's answer (42:1–6), in which he retracts all which he has said, and the account (42:7–9) of Jehovah's anger against the friends, and his feeling that after all, Job has represented him rightly. Read the conclusion found in the Epilogue (42:10–16) in which Job is given double what he formerly possessed, friends return to him, more children are born to him, and his life prolonged.

How now is one to regard the Book of Job? The author has been given from on high a new and higher conception of God. This author is living at a time when men are suffering, though they are

confident of their innocence, and at the same time feel that God has refused to hear their cries. The author believes that the remedy for the situation is this broader and deeper conception of God which has been revealed to him. He therefore makes an effort to convey this idea to the men of his times. He puts his thought in a literary form, the most magnificent the world has ever seen. Job represents the case of the sufferer, the friends and Elihu represent the conceptions of God which had hitherto prevailed, but which were not broad enough to cover the case. In the speeches of Jehovah out of the whirlwind the true conception is given, and the suffering one seeing (as the new light breaks in upon him) this new conception of God, now humbly acknowledges that he has hitherto misunderstood God, and that now his eyes are open.

ECCLESIASTES

Twenty-seventh day. §245. In the book of Ecclesiastes, the work of another of the Sages of Israel, we have an interesting discussion of a problem not so vital, perhaps, as that of the suffering of the righteous, but closely associated with it, the problem of skepticism. Is life worth living? We can spend but a short time in running through this book according to the following analysis which does not indicate that the argument is complete or consecutive. Possibly we have only fragments of the writings of this author upon this subject, and we may read from them, though at random, noting the following topics of the chaps. 1–12 inclusive: 1:1–11: The worthlessness of life. 1:12—2:26: learning, luxury are nothing; to eat, drink, and enjoy life is all. 3:1–22: but it is better to recognize enjoyment as a gift of God; work also is profitable for enjoyment. 4:1–16: but success brings only envy and loss of companionship. 5:1—6:12: religion is empty, government oppressive, others reap the advantage of one's work. 7:1–29: but experience has taught the value of reputation, the joy of unselfishness, the evil of impatience, the laws of prosperity and adversity, the fact that God made man to be upright. 8:1—9:10: better to make life worth living even though wicked and righteous both alike die. 9:11—10:20: things seem to go by chance but it is better to submit in silence. 11:1—12:7: the preceding were but temporary phases of thought; after all the right thing is to do good and help others and whatever the future may bring such a life will make the present more endurable; the future world may prove the trials and sufferings of this life to have been the beginning of an education which shall ultimately lead to success. 12:8–14: the comment of a later writer, the wisest thing for a man to do is to "fear God and keep his commandments."

What is the result of the musings of the Preacher? Do we not find them in the eleventh and twelfth chapters? Does he not in effect say, "whatever the joys of life, whatever the end of life, whatever the future may be, wisdom would teach us that obedience to God, and life in accordance with his will, brings peace and sanity and the highest joy"?

THE SONG OF SONGS

Twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth days. §246. We have now two days to devote to the reading of a very charming book: the Song of Solomon or the Song of Songs. This book is not a song written by Solomon, but a song about him. There are two quite distinct theories as to the structure of this book, but only one as to its object, namely, to set forth the joy and beauty of pure wedded life, as distinguished from the sensuality of the life of the harem, and the temptation to accept a life of splendor with such union, rather than the simple life of the rustic lover and the quiet home. Two theories in regard to the structure of the book are: (1) that it is a collection of wedding songs without special interrelation with each other; the other that these songs and other material have been woven together into a sort of drama. On the basis of this last theory let us follow the story.

First act.—Read 1:1—2:8: the Shulamite has been induced to leave her vineyards and come to Solomon's court. He praises her beauty and by fair words strives to win her love. He partially succeeds, but she resists his advances and goes back to her shepherd lover. The court of King Solomon is temporarily removed to a quiet retreat in northern Palestine. Solomon, having perceived the beauty of the Shulamite, desires to win her to be one of his wives. She is persuaded to leave her vineyards and come to the pavilion of the king. The ladies of the court, concubines of Solomon, sing in praise of the king, and describe the delights of life with their royal lover, thinking thereby to influence the Shulamite to desire to join them. She, however, modestly disclaims any charms which might win the favor of Solomon, and gives expression to regret that she has left her wonted tasks to come to a place so unsuited to her. She longs to know where her lover is tending his flocks, and is smitten with the thought that to leave his companionship for the royal court is as truly desertion of her lover as it would be to have left him for one of his fellow shepherds. The ladies tell her that if she wishes her lover she would better go back to the shepherds' tents. Solomon thereupon enters and praises her beauty. By this the Shulamite is aroused from her roving thoughts, and as a defense tells Solomon of her own beloved. The dialogue closes with the refrain of adjuration to the ladies not to attempt to awaken love in her unless it comes unsolicited to her bosom.

Second act.—Read 2:8—3:5: of which the thought is as follows: the Shulamite then describes to the ladies a visit from her lover, dwelling upon their rural delights, and the sweetness of her lover's voice as he sings to her. Then, seeking repose, she dreams that she has been taken to the city, Jerusalem, and that she goes about endeavoring to find her lover, and is successful in being reunited to him.

Third act.—Read 3:6—5:8: The scene is now changed to Jerusalem. Preparations have been made at the palace to receive the addition to the harem. Marriage festivities are arranged. The people are all out to see the pageantry. A chorus of citizens describes Solomon's palanquin as it approaches bearing its burden of beauty. Then in his palace Solomon once more visits the Shulamite and extols her charms in a number of wonderful similes. The Shulamite responds no word but that she will be true to her own beloved, and avers that she would prefer her peaceful mountain home with its spice trees, to the great city with all its wealth. Then her mind becomes excited by the peril of her situation,

and her feelings rise to a climax, as she thinks of her lover coming and courting her and taking her with him. The marriage preparations awaken this thought. Once again she seeks repose and dreams of endeavoring to find her lover: but this time she fails, and awakens only to adjure the ladies, the only ones to whom she can appeal, to try to find her lover for her.

Fourth act.—Read 5:9—8:5: The ladies strive to soothe her by asking why she makes such an ado over her beloved; what is he more than another? The Shulamite then describes him, and becomes calmer as she proceeds. A third time Solomon approaches her and renews his suit. He repeats his similes and extols her above all his queens and concubines. A scene follows in which the ladies desire to see the Shulamite execute a rustic dance for their benefit. She accedes to their request, though modestly, and they describe her as she appears while dancing. Solomon observes her, and enters while they are speaking, to make one more effort to persuade her; but she takes his words from his mouth and maintains the most unflinching attachment to her shepherd. The oft-repeated adjuration closes the act.

Fifth act.—Read 8:5-14: The last act describes the return of the Shulamite to her mountain home. A chorus of shepherds and vinedressers welcomes her. She sings the beautiful song of love, vss. 6, 7. She then describes how her virtue served her to resist the blandishments of Solomon, and the drama closes with the rejoicing of the reunited lovers.

Consider how intimately connected with the true conception of God is the question of purity of life, and how, in these last days of the Old Testament times, when in every Levitical ceremony the individual is so greatly emphasized, the importance of purity in individual life comes to the front. It is not difficult to see how a Sage of these times should think it wise to prepare a message which, based upon the divine principles of life, should give sharp rebuke to every step in the direction of sensuality. This was in accordance with the teaching of the law as seen in the seventh commandment, and of the prophets as repeated again and again. It was one of the problems of ancient life, which, side by side with those of suffering and skepticism, formed the wonderful trilogy given us in the Scriptures.

DANIEL

Thirtieth day. §247. Our last work will be the examination of the Book of Daniel, which in the Hebrew Bible is classed among the Writings rather than among the prophets, where it stands in our present volume. In regard to this book we can only say that it has been greatly misunderstood in the past because it was so difficult of interpretation. Later scholarship has placed the date of this book very late, at a time when the writer could look back upon the past history and discuss it, although in veiled terms, with great intelligence. Taking chap. 11, which contains unmistakable historical allusions, we intrepret the history thus: the writer is dealing with the succession of four great empires—the Babylonian, Median, Persian, Greek, in the latter period of which he is living. But he is considering these successive empires only that he may lead up to his announcement in chap. 12 of the coming of the kingdom of God. In chap. 7 the four kingdoms represented by the four beasts, and in chap. 2 the four kingdoms symbolized by the colossal image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream are the same four kingdoms. We have not time to go into the history of this period, nor to interpret the book further, except to say that the lesson which it contains, as will have been seen by the reading of the chapters suggested, is the old lesson of man's extremity as "God's opportunity.". However cruel the sufferings or desperate the outlook, yet the Lord is mindful of his own and will himself deliver them without human hands. God's kingdom comes (2:34), and his enemies are destroyed (8:25). In the most skilful way the book reaches its splendid climax. It moves steadily on from a distinct past in which God's servants had been rewarded and his enemies crushed, down through the centuries in which successive empires were all unconsciously working out his predetermined plan, and on to the darkest days in the history, so dark because the glorious and everlasting kingdom of God was so soon to dawn. Shall we recall that the date of this book is probably some time in the century preceding the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, 164 B. C., less than two hundred years before the coming of Christ?

Thirty-first day. §248. Shall we now take a few days to run through the direction sheets, noting especially the end of each month's work, summing up and classifying the teaching which is suggested by each book? Do we not find as we examine this collection of teachings a wonderful uniformity about it? Do not all the writers lead up to certain fundamental principles: Jehovah, the creator of the material universe, and man; Jehovah, a spirit; Jehovah moving in all the affairs of human history; Jehovah gradually lifting man to higher and higher conceptions of himself; Jehovah gradually inspiring men to emulate him, to form their characters on the basis of his ethical requirements? Have we not suggestions many and clear of the teaching concerning the loving character of God, which was perfectly interpreted only when Jesus came? Shall we not return again and again to the study of these Old Testament books, recognizing in their contents the most wonderful examples of human energy, courage, endurance, patience, and faith, and the most inspiring pictures of a supreme God in whom we may trust and to whom we may turn for counsel?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

READ CAREFULLY.—Answer questions, as far as possible, from memory. Then take your Bible and review with the questions in mind, revising your answers as you read. Should you wish to work for a certificate, send for the duplicate blanks and return them to the office of the Institute, Hyde Park, Chicago, Ill. Certificates will be awarded all who answer fifteen questions. An Honor sign will be placed upon the certificates of all who answer twenty questions.

1. What general name is given to the books studied this month? .....

2. What is the literary form of the majority of these books? .....

3. What is the character of the Book of Psalms? .....

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4. Into what divisions does the Book of Psalms fall and by what are these divisions indicated? .....

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5. Name some of the nature psalms. .....

6. What is the philosophy of life presented in Ps. 90? .....

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7. What psalms may we associate with some such occasion as the departure of the Assyrian army?

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8. Why do we regard Pss. 134–38 as temple psalms? .....

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9. Why do so many of the psalms insist upon the immediate punishment of the wicked .....

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10. Name several prayer psalms. .....

11. By what name are those writers designated who consider the problems of life from a philosophic point of view? .....

12. What book contains the popular sayings of the Sages? .....

13. In the thought of the Sages, what is wisdom?.....

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14. What is the fundamental difference between the basis of conduct between man and man as presented by the Sages and by Jesus?.....

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15. What is the great problem of the Book of Job?.....

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16. How would you state the solution of that problem according to the author?.....

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17. What is the problem of the Book of Ecclesiastes?.....

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18. What conclusion does the author reach?.....

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19. What is the problem presented in the Song of Songs?.....

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20. Make a full statement of your opinion as to the religious value of Old Testament study.....

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